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PRÉFACE

Les critiques des élèves en apprennent long au professeur; une remarque, faite en passant, montre souvent qu'elles n'ont pas saisi, ou qu'elles ont compris de travers parce qu'elles jugent avec leurs idées d'aujourd'hui et ne connaissent que les mœurs de leur pays. C'est au professeur à s'ingénier pour suppléer à ce manque de connaissances indispensables. Aiguillonnée par cette nécessité, j'ai cherché des textes qui mettraient mes élèves à même de se rendre compte des idées et des mœurs du XVIII^{me} siècle. Comme, au point de vue de la pratique de la langue, il leur manque surtout l'habileté de savoir manier le français idiomatique, il m'a semblé que l'étude de la correspondance et des mémoires de cette époque était un sujet tout trouvé qui combinerait l'étude des mœurs à celle des idiotismes. Ce sujet est d'un intérêt général puisque les Français, les Anglais et les Américains ont tous leur mot à dire; en outre, chez certains écrivains de ce temps-là, l'anglais a toutes les qualités du français. En traduisant ces textes, on arrivera à combler une double lacune.

Comme, au dire de Rousseau, «les Français écrivent comme ils parlent», nous trouverons dans les lettres le vocabulaire familier, qui doit compléter celui qu'on acquiert par la lecture des grands écrivains. A aucune époque l'art de la conversation n'a été porté à un plus haut point de perfection; la correspondance, qui en est l'écho, nous met au courant de toutes les questions intéressantes qui préoccupèrent les écrivains de ce temps-là.

Ces sujets si variés sont traités avec une netteté, une finesse

incomparables. Il est facile de retenir un idiotisme quand il est enchâssé dans une petite scène de comédie; et nombre de lettres de cette époque ne sont pas autre chose. Dans les mémoires, les portraits de personnages en vue sont croqués sur le vif avec un art d'une amusante prestesse. Voilà les modèles qu'il faut étudier; il ne s'agit que de faire un choix. Pour qu'il soit profitable, il faut une idée directrice: recherchons l'origine et le développement des influences étrangères sur la France du XVIII^{me} siècle.

L'influence anglaise, ayant été prépondérante, doit passer en premier lieu; d'autant plus qu'ayant rayonné plus loin, elle se manifeste dans le domaine des idées scientifiques, philosophiques et politiques. Les écrivains qui ont le plus contribué à la répandre doivent donc être présentés suivant l'ordre chronologique de leur séjour en Angleterre: Voltaire, Montesquieu, Buffon, etc. . . . Les idées nouvelles se répandirent par l'Encyclopédie et les salons; feuilletons les mémoires, nous y trouverons les portraits des philosophes, des femmes du monde, des étrangers qui formèrent cette société cosmopolite. Puis comme dans la littérature le réalisme est de mise, il sera possible de comparer la vie au roman, puisque là encore, les autobiographies, les lettres sont à la mode.

On pourra, par ce moyen, suivre l'évolution graduelle du réalisme au romantisme, tout en faisant venir à leur heure les différentes influences étrangères: orientale, espagnole, anglaise. Enfin, l'influence grecque sera indiquée comme étant l'avant-courrière du grand réveil de la poésie lyrique.

Ce sujet étant assez neuf pour la plupart des élèves, il a semblé nécessaire de relier par un commentaire et par de nombreuses citations les groupes de morceaux choisis, afin que chaque partie, venant se placer en son lieu, contribue à faire ressortir le dessin particulier de cette mosaïque.

Je tiens à remercier ici ceux qui ont bien voulu m'aider de leurs conseils: Mr. C. H. C. Wright, de Harvard University, qui a consenti à critiquer le plan général de cet ouvrage; mes collègues de Smith College: Mademoiselle Louise Delpit, qui a bien voulu critiquer les passages écrits en français; Miss Alma Le Duc et Miss Elizabeth Tetlow, qui ont eu l'obligeance de revoir les passages traduits en anglais.

A. P.

Pour la commodité de l'élève, les notes forment un opuscle publié à part.

IDIOMATIC FRENCH COMPOSITION

PART I

1. La Bastille

La Bastille était la prison qui, sous l'ancien régime, symbolisait au plus haut degré le règne de l'arbitraire. Y avoir fait un séjour n'avait rien d'infamant, car ce qui dégrade, c'est de subir une condamnation motivée; or, à cette époque, le roi de France, sans l'ombre de formalités judiciaires, pouvait faire enfermer par lettre de cachet, c'est-à-dire par ordre signé de sa main, quiconque avait encouru son déplaisir; souvent même, l'ordre qui enlevait à un de ses sujets sa liberté était octroyé à la demande d'un père de famille incapable de faire respecter sa propre autorité. Si le roi jouissait d'un pouvoir absolu et se considérait comme le chef d'une immense famille qui comprenait son peuple entier, par contre, chaque père de famille, le prenant pour modèle, exerçait sur les siens une autorité incontestée et, le cas échéant, le père de famille s'adressait directement au roi, qui donnait l'ordre d'interner dans un château, de faire entrer au couvent ou d'enfermer à la Bastille les récalcitrants. En général, l'intention du roi était de maintenir l'ordre. Parfois, cependant, l'emprisonnement était une faveur qu'on lui arrachait; ainsi Mirabeau, le grand tribun, au début de sa carrière, se voyant pourchassé par ses créanciers, propose lui-même à son père de demander

au roi une lettre de cachet: son internement devait être un moyen commode d'échapper à ses juges naturels. Mirabeau père, une fois lancé dans cette voie, ne s'arrête plus; il revient à la charge jusqu'à 70 fois, et fait enfermer tour à tour ou simultanément: son fils, sa femme, sa fille; il finit par lasser la patience du roi, qui s'écrie: «Il faudrait un secrétaire exprès pour eux.»

Car en effet, pour ne pas prendre de décision à la légère, le roi a des secrétaires chargés de le renseigner. Au XVIII^{me} siècle, on retrouve la trace de cette coutume jusque dans le roman. Lorsque Gil Blas devient secrétaire du ministre, on l'emploie d'abord à écrire l'histoire circonstanciée des familles nobles du royaume, le prince royal tenant à avoir sous la main des registres complets. Or, il est avéré que semblable travail avait été préparé à la demande du duc de Bourgogne.

Pour les privilégiés, il est une prison privilégiée: c'est la Bastille; les prisonniers sont les hôtes du roi et, comme tels, ils sont traités aussi royalement qu'on peut l'être en prison. Au XVIII^{me} siècle, ce sont surtout les écrivains qui y sont enfermés. Voltaire, qui y passa l'année 1717, mit son temps à profit pour écrire la *Henriade*; neuf ans plus tard, il y fit un court séjour avant son départ pour l'Angleterre.

Si douce que fût cette prison, elle représentait le règne de l'arbitraire. Louis XVI s'en rendait si bien compte que, lorsqu'on voulut lui arracher l'autorisation de laisser jouer «Le Mariage de Figaro», cette pièce où étaient attaqués tous les abus de l'ancien régime, il s'écria: «Si on joue cette pièce, il faudra fermer la Bastille.»

2. Marmontel at the Bastille

(Words or phrases in brackets are not to be translated)

We spent¹ part of the night together *getting everything ready*² for the printing of the next [number of the] Mercury and, after³ having slept a few hours, *I rose, packed my things*⁴ and *went to call on*⁵ Mr. de Sartines, where I found the policeman⁶ who was going⁷ to accompany me.

Mr. de Sartines was planning⁸ to have him ride to the Bastille in another carriage. It was I who *was unwilling to accept*⁹ this obliging¹⁰ offer and it was in the same carriage that my guide¹¹ and I reached the Bastille. There¹² I was received in the council-room by the governor and his staff; and there¹² I began to realize¹³ that I was well recommended. This governor, Mr. Abadie, after³ having read the letters which the policeman⁶ had handed¹⁴ to him, asked me if I wished to keep my servant with me, on¹⁵ condition, however, that we would share the same room and that he would not leave the prison *until I did*.¹⁶ This servant was Bury. I consulted him about it; he answered he¹⁷ did not wish to leave me. *They made a pretence*¹⁸ of searching¹⁹ my luggage and they¹⁸ took²⁰ me to a very large room [upstairs] where there was *by way of*²¹ furniture two beds, two tables, a wardrobe, and three straw chairs. It was²² cold, but a turnkey *kindled for us a bright fire*²³ and brought [in] *an abundant supply*²⁴ of wood. At the same time they gave me pens,²⁵ ink, and paper, on condition that I *should account for*²⁶ the use and number of sheets that I should receive.

While I was arranging my table in order to begin²⁷ writing, the turnkey came back to ask me if I found my bed good enough; after³ having examined it, I answered that the

mattresses²⁸ were bad and that the bedclothes were soiled. Instantly²⁹ everything was changed. They¹⁸ *sent to ask*³⁰ also [about] my dinner hour. I answered the usual hour. The Bastille had a library; the governor sent me the catalogue,²⁸ leaving me the choice of the books which were in it. I refused³¹ for myself,³² but my servant asked [for] Prévost's novels and they were brought to him. *For my part*,³³ I had *enough to do to keep me from being bored*.³⁴ For a long time, I had been provoked at the lack of appreciation shown by literary people³⁵ for Lucan's poems which they had not read and knew³⁶ only through the barbaric and affected translation of Brébeuf. I had resolved to translate it more suitably³⁷ and more faithfully in prose, and this work which would hold my attention without tiring³⁸ my brain *seemed to be*³⁹ the best suited to the solitary leisure of my prison. Therefore I had brought with me the *Pharsalia* and, in order to understand it better, I had been careful to add to it Cæsar's *Commentaries*. *Here I was then*⁴⁰ comfortably installed *at a warm fire-side*,⁴¹ meditating about the quarrel of Cæsar and Pompey and forgetting mine with the Duke d'Aumont. *As for*⁴² Bury [who was] as much [of a] philosopher as I, *he was busy making*⁴³ our beds placed at the two opposite corners of my room, which was lit up by a bright winter sun,⁴⁴ in spite of the iron bars of two *heavy grated windows*⁴⁵ which could not *cut off from me the view*⁴⁶ of the faubourg Saint-Antoine.

Two hours later the bolts of the two doors which shut me in aroused⁴⁷ me by their noise from my deep reverie, and two turnkeys carrying a dinner which I believed to be mine come in to serve it in silence. One of them sets in front of the fire three little dishes covered with plain crockery⁴⁸ plates, the other spreads⁴⁹ on the one of⁵⁰ the two

tables which was not being used⁵¹ a cloth rather coarse but white. I see him *setting this table*⁵² rather neatly with a *pewter fork*⁵³ and spoon, *home made bread*,⁵⁴ and a bottle of wine. This work done, the two turnkeys withdraw with the same noise of keys and bolts. Then Bury invites me *to sit down at the table*⁵⁵ and he brings me the soup. It was [on] a Friday. This soup, *suitable for a fast day*,⁵⁶ was a purée made from white beans prepared with⁵⁷ the freshest butter, and a small dish of the same beans was the first that Bury brought me. I found everything very good. The codfish he brought me for the second service was even better. A little *bit of garlic*⁵⁸ which seasoned it gave it a delicacy of taste and aroma which would have suited⁵⁹ the taste of the most fastidious Gascon. The wine was not excellent, but it was tolerably good; no dessert; of course, one must expect to be deprived of something. Furthermore, I found that the prison fare⁶⁰ was very good. As I was rising⁶¹ from [the] table and as⁶² Bury was going *to sit down to it*,⁵⁵ for there was enough⁶³ for him in what was left, lo!⁶⁴ the two turnkeys reappear with pyramids of new dishes in their hands. *At the sight of the elegant service*,⁶⁵ [of the beautiful table, the] fine linen, the beautiful crockery,⁶⁵ [the] silver fork and spoon, we realized our mistake, but *we pretended not to be surprised at anything*⁶⁶ and when our turnkeys having placed everything on the table withdrew, Bury said: "Sir, you have just⁶⁷ eaten my dinner, *you will not take it amiss*⁶⁸ if in turn I eat yours." "Quite right," I said, and the walls of my room were, I think, very much surprised at *hearing [the sound of] laughter*.⁶⁹

This was not a dinner for a fast day; ⁷⁰ here is the menu: an excellent soup, a succulent slice of beef, a leg of boiled capon dripping with⁷² fat *which melted*⁷³ in the mouth, a

little dish of artichokes *fried in oil*,⁷⁴ a dish of spinach, a very fine winter pear, a bunch of fresh grapes, a bottle of old Burgundy, and the best mocha [coffee]; that was Bury's dinner with the exception of the coffee and the fruit which he was kind enough⁷⁵ to keep for me.

The manner in which I was treated at the Bastille *led me to think*⁷⁶ that I would not remain there long; and my work, *combined with*⁷⁷ interesting readings, (for I had with me Montaigne, Horace and La Bruyère) left me *but few tedious hours*.⁷⁸

One thing only plunged¹⁰ me occasionally into melancholy; the walls of my room were covered with inscriptions all of which bore the stamp⁷⁹ of the sad or gloomy meditations which no doubt had haunted⁸⁰ the unfortunate [men] who before me had been in this prison; I thought I saw them there still *wandering about with moanings*⁸¹ and their shades seemed to surround⁸² me.

3. Voltaire en Angleterre

1726-1729

Voltaire, arrivant en Angleterre, fut reçu par Lord Bolingbroke. C'était en France que l'homme de lettres et le grand seigneur anglais s'étaient connus. Lord Bolingbroke présenta Voltaire à ses amis, qui formaient le groupe des libres penseurs, des déistes. Voltaire était, pour ainsi dire, né libre penseur; il trouva cependant que les grands seigneurs anglais allaient parfois trop loin et, s'il se fit le porte-voix de leurs idées, ce ne fut qu'en les atténuant un peu. C'était l'avis de d'Alembert.* «Voltaire n'a fait que re-

**Correspondance avec le roi de Prusse*, p. 100, 25 janvier 1777.

cueillir les sentiments de quelques Anglais et leurs critiques de la Bible; lui-même il gémit de leur audace, et il ne paraît avoir fait cet ouvrage que dans le dessein qu'on le réfute. On a tant dit de choses dans ce siècle contre la religion! Ses *Commentaires sur la Bible* sont moins forts qu'une infinité d'autres ouvrages qui font crouler tout l'édifice, en sorte qu'on a de la peine à le relever. Mais il est plus aisé de condamner un livre à être brûlé que de le réfuter.

Voici comment M. Lanson* explique le rôle de Voltaire dans le domaine de l'exégèse biblique: «Il mit dans les esprits l'idée qu'il y a une critique de la Bible, que l'histoire religieuse se fait par les mêmes méthodes que la profane, qu'on y est en présence des mêmes difficultés, des mêmes incertitudes, des mêmes causes d'erreurs, accrues de tout ce que la piété et l'autorité mettent d'obstacles à la recherche de la vérité dans ces matières. Il fit connaître à tous ce qu'un petit nombre savait, les doutes et les débats sur la composition des livres saints, sur leur date ou leur authenticité, sur l'histoire des premiers siècles de l'Eglise. Il fit rentrer l'histoire sainte dans le plan de l'histoire universelle, non plus comme le centre et l'origine de tout, mais comme une vague dans l'Océan.»

4. A passage from the Introduction to Lord¹ Chesterfield's Letters

Edited by J. Bradshaw

Lord Chesterfield's "Characters" are not as well² known as they deserve to be,³ [these] with⁴ most of his other writings

* *Les grands Ecrivains français: Voltaire*, p. 173. Hachette.

having⁵ been *thrown into the shade by*⁶ the ‘Letters’. The shorter ones are as piquant and⁷ pithy⁸ as those of ‘Jehu Junior’ in ‘Vanity Fair’, while in some of the longer ones — in Lord Bute for example — in⁹ epigrammatic style, pointed¹⁰ satire, and character painting, he is not surpassed even by Macaulay.

5. Character of Bolingbroke

It is impossible to find lights and shades strong¹ enough to paint the character of Lord Bolingbroke, who was a most mortifying instance of the violence of human passions, and of the weakness of *the most improved and exalted human reason*.² His virtues and his vices, his reason and his passions, did not blend³ themselves by a gradation of tints,⁴ but formed a shining⁵ and sudden contrast.

During his long exile in France, he applied himself to study with his characteristic⁶ ardor; and there he formed, and *chiefly executed*,⁷ the plan of his great philosophical work.⁸ The common bounds of human knowledge⁹ were too narrow for his *warm and aspiring imagination*; he must go¹⁰ ‘*extra flammantia moenia mundi*,’ and¹¹ explore the unknown¹² and unknowable¹³ [regions] of metaphysics, *which*¹⁴ open *an unbounded field for the excursions*¹⁵ of an ardent imagination, where endless conjectures supply¹⁶ the defect¹⁷ of unattainable¹⁸ knowledge, and too often usurp both its¹⁹ name and its influence. *He had a very handsome person*,²⁰ *with a most engaging address in his air and manners*,²¹ he had all the dignity and good-breeding which a man of quality should or can have, and which *so few, in this country at least, really have*.²²

He professed²³ himself [a] Deist, believing²⁴ in a [general]

Providence, but doubting of,²⁵ though by no means rejecting (as is commonly supposed), the immortality²⁶ of the soul and a future state.²⁷

He died of a cruel and *shocking distemper*,²⁸ a cancer in²⁹ his face, which he endured with firmness. A week³⁰ before he died, *I took my last leave*³¹ of him with grief, and he returned me his last farewell³² with tenderness, and said, "God who placed me here *will do what he pleases with*³³ me hereafter,"²⁷ and *he knows best*³⁴ *what to do*.³⁵ May he bless you!"

Upon the whole³⁶ of this extraordinary character, where good and ill were perpetually jostling³⁷ each other, *what can we say, but alas!*³⁶ poor human nature!

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

6. Memoirs of M. de Voltaire

Written by way of preface to a translation of "The Henriade"
made by Purdon. — GOLDSMITH

He only wanted¹ introduction,² his own merit *was enough to procure the rest*.³ As [a] companion no man⁴ ever exceeded⁵ him when he pleased⁶ to lead the conversation, which,⁷ however, was not always the case. In company⁸ which he either disliked or despised, *few could be more reserved than he*,⁹ but when he *was warmed in discourse*,¹⁰ and had got over a hesitating manner which sometimes he was subject to, it was rapture to hear him. His meagre¹¹ visage *seemed insensibly to gather beauty*,¹² every muscle [in it] had meaning,¹³ and his eye beamed with unusual brightness. The person who writes this memoir, who had the honor and the pleasure of being his acquaintance,¹⁴ remembers to have seen him in a select company of wits¹⁵ of both sexes at Paris, when the

subject happened¹⁶ to turn upon English taste and learning.¹⁷ Fontenelle who was of the party,¹⁸ and who being unacquainted with the language or authors of the country *he undertook to condemn¹⁹ with a spirit truly vulgar²¹ began to revile both.*²⁰ Diderot who liked the English and knew something²² of their literary pretensions,²³ attempted to vindicate²⁵ their poetry and learning,²⁶ *but with unequal abilities.*²⁴ The company quickly perceived²⁷ that Fontenelle was superior in the dispute²⁸ and were surprised at the silence which Voltaire had preserved²⁹ all the former part of the night,³⁰ particularly³¹ as the conversation happened to turn³² upon one of his favorite topics. Fontenelle continued his triumph till about twelve o'clock,³³ when³⁴ Voltaire appeared at last roused from³⁵ his reverie. His whole frame³⁶ seemed animated. He began his defense with the utmost elegance mixed with spirit³⁷ and now and then³⁸ let fall the finest strokes of raillery upon his antagonist; and his harangue lasted till three in³⁹ the morning. I must confess that, whether⁴⁰ from national partiality or⁴⁰ from the elegant sensibility⁴¹ of his manner, *I never was so much charmed,*⁴⁰ nor did I ever remember so absolute⁴² a victory as he gained in this dispute.

*Upon his arrival in England his first care*⁴³ was to learn so much of the language⁴⁴ as might enable him to mix⁴⁵ in conversation, and study more thoroughly the genius of the people.

He was the first foreigner who saw the amazing⁴⁶ irregular beauties of Shakespeare, gave Milton the character he deserved,⁴⁷ spoke of every English poet with some degree of applause,⁴⁸ and opened a new page of beauty⁴⁹ to the eyes of his astonished countrymen. It is⁵⁰ to him we owe that our language has taken the place of the Italian among the

polite,⁵¹ and that⁵⁰ even ladies are taught to admire Milton, Pope and Otway.

7. Portrait of Lord Chesterfield

In¹ many respects² Chesterfield was in advance of the³ time [in which he lived]: — in⁴ [religious] toleration:⁵ "I would," he says, "as soon⁶ murder a man for⁷ his estate⁸ as prosecute him for his religious and speculative⁹ errors;" and "*I should as soon expect*¹⁰ every man to be of my height¹¹ and temperament as to wish that he should reason precisely as I do,"¹² — in⁴ his liberal views *on the bill for*¹³ the Naturalization of the Jews, passed in 1752,¹⁵ but repealed¹⁶ [in] the following year¹⁷ owing to the "groundless¹⁹ and [senseless] clamors"¹⁸ against²⁰ it; and in²¹ his advocacy²² of a *modern side*²³ in school²⁴ and university education.

But²⁵ above all he stands conspicuous²⁷ for his wise and liberal administration²⁸ *as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland*.²⁶ "I came," he wrote, "determined to prosecute no set²⁹ of persons and to be governed by none." *His rule was*³⁰ as conciliatory as it was firm, and as *free from*³¹ panic as it was from partizanship.³² When one morning he was told that it was feared³³ the people of Connaught were rising,³⁴ he looked [at] his watch and said, "It is certainly time³⁵ [for them] for it is now nine o'clock." But he neglected³⁶ no precaution for³⁷ the public safety, and the result was that while a Scottish army was marching on Derby, and³⁸ the dynasty in England was tottering, Ireland remained absolutely quiet. "No ruler," writes the late³⁹ Lord Carnarvon, himself⁴⁰ not long ago⁴⁰ Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, "no ruler⁴¹ was ever more easy of access,⁴² more free⁴³ from the least shadow⁴⁴ of corruption, more ready to reward merit,

more indulgent when indulgence was safe,⁴⁵ more firm when firmness was necessary."

He was interested⁴⁶ in the welfare⁴⁷ of Ireland; in his letters of October 8, 1755, and November 25, 1757 he says: — "There is a great deal of money *lying dead*⁴⁸ in the Treasury; let them *apply that*⁴⁹ to real public uses. Let them encourage the extension and improvement⁵⁰ of their manufactures,⁵⁰ the cultivation of their lands, and above all the Protestant [Charter] Schools . . . Let them⁵¹ make Connaught and Kerry know that there is a God, a king, and a government — three things to which they are at present⁵² utter strangers."⁵³ . . . "Tie them down⁵⁴ to the Government by the tender but strong bonds⁵⁵ of landed⁵⁶ property, which the Pope will have much ado⁵⁷ to dissolve, notwithstanding his power of loosing and binding." What his views⁵⁹ of separation from England [were] — at a time when⁶⁰ Ireland had its own Parliament — was thus expressed:⁵⁸ "When Ireland is no longer dependent on England, the Lord have mercy⁶¹ on it!"

Lord Chesterfield was intimate⁶² with all the greatest men of letters, with Addison, Swift, Pope, Gay, Arbuthnot, Johnson; he knew Algarotti, Montesquieu and Voltaire; he *was the centre of fashion*⁶³ in England, and was well acquainted⁶⁴ with foreign society;⁶⁵ he was an acknowledged⁶⁶ chief in the world of letters, whilst in politics⁶⁷ he played his part⁶⁸ *as a successful diplomatist*⁶⁹ and an eminent administrator."

8. Publication de La Henriade

Voltaire ne put s'empêcher de constater la différence entre la manière dont les écrivains étaient traités en France

et en Angleterre. Dans le pays où il venait s'installer, il voyait que les littérateurs, les savants étaient partout considérés et que parfois même ils arrivaient aux plus hautes dignités, grâce à leur seul mérite. Il profita donc de circonstances si propices pour publier, par souscription, une édition de luxe de «La Henriade». La reine Caroline mit son nom en tête de la liste. Aujourd'hui on ne lit plus guère «La Henriade», car ce qui manque le plus à ce poème épique, c'est d'être poétique; mais, au XVIII^{me} siècle, il n'y avait pas d'homme cultivé qui n'en pût réciter de longues tirades; on se passionnait pour l'idée qui en fait le fond: *la tolérance*. Aujourd'hui que cette idée est entrée dans les mœurs, ce poème semble avoir perdu tout intérêt.

Dans une lettre à d'Alembert, Frédéric* II fait allusion à cet état d'esprit: «On dit que vous autres Français commencez à prononcer sans horreur le mot de *tolérance*; vous vous en avisez un peu tard. Dans le temps de Louis XIV, ce mot n'était pas admis dans le dictionnaire théologique de son confesseur.» Dans une autre lettre,† le roi dit une chose qui montre à quel point il appréciait «La Henriade»: «Vous avez deviné juste sur le buste qui vous a été envoyé, c'est celui de Voltaire. Le mérite de ce morceau consiste dans la ressemblance; c'est Voltaire lui-même, il ne lui manque que la parole. Vous direz qu'il y manque donc ce qu'il y a de mieux; mais la porcelaine et la sculpture ne vont point jusqu'à cette perfection, et pour avoir l'ensemble, il faut regarder le buste en lisant «La Henriade.»

*Correspondance avec le roi de Prusse, page 42, 9 septembre 1775.

†Ditto p. 22, 8 mai 1775.

9. Letter of Lord Chesterfield to his son

Bath, October 4, 1752.

My dear Friend,

I consider you now at the court of Augustus, where, if ever *the desire of pleasing animated*¹ you, it must² make you *exert all the means*³ of doing it.⁴ You will see there, full⁵ as well, *I dare say*,⁶ as Horace did⁷ at Rome, how States⁸ are defended by arms, adorned by manners, and improved by laws. Nay,⁹ you have an Horace there,¹⁰ as well as an Augustus; I need not name Voltaire, “*qui nil molitur inepte*,” as Horace himself said¹¹ of another poet. I have lately¹² read over¹³ all his works that are published, though¹⁴ I had read them more than¹⁵ once [before]. *I was induced to this by*¹⁶ his ‘*Siècle de Louis XIV.*’ which I have yet¹⁷ read but four times. In reading¹⁸ over all his works, with more attention *I suppose*¹⁹ than before, my former¹⁹ admiration of him is, I own, turned²⁰ into astonishment. There is *no one kind of*²¹ writing in which²² he has not excelled. You are so severe a classic, that I question²³ whether you will allow me to call his ‘*Henriade*’ an epic poem, for want of²⁴ the proper²⁵ number of gods, devils, witches and other absurdities, requisite²⁸ for the machinery;²⁶ [which] machinery is *it seems*²⁷ necessary to constitute the *Epopée*. But whether²⁹ you do or not, I will declare³⁰ (though possibly to my own shame) that I never read any epic poem with near³¹ so much pleasure. I am *grown old*,³² and have possibly³³ lost a great deal of that fire which formerly made me love fire *in others at any rate*,³⁴ and however attended³⁵ with smoke; but now *I must have all sense*,³⁶ and³⁷ cannot³⁸ for the sake of five righteous lines forgive a thousand³⁹ absurd [ones]. In this disposition of mind, judge⁴⁰ whether

I can read all Homer through tout de suite. I *admire his beauties*;⁴¹ but, *to tell you the truth*,⁴² when he slumbers I sleep. Virgil, I confess, is all sense,⁴³ and therefore I like him better than his model; but he is often languid, especially in his five or six last books, during which I am obliged to take *a good deal of snuff*.⁴⁴ Besides, *I profess myself an ally*⁴⁵ of Turnus against the pious Æneas, who, like many soi-disant pious people, does⁴⁶ the most flagrant injustice and violence, in order⁴⁷ to execute what they impudently call the will of Heaven. But what will you say, when I *tell you truly*,⁴⁸ that I cannot⁴⁹ [possibly] read our countryman, Milton, through?⁴⁹ I acknowledge⁵⁰ *him to have*⁵¹ some most sublime passages, some prodigious flashes of light; but then you must acknowledge that light is often followed by "darkness visible", to use his own expression. Besides, not having *the honor to be acquainted*⁵² with any of the parties⁵³ in his poem, except the man and the woman, the characters and speeches of a dozen or two of angels, and of as many devils *are as much above my reach as*⁵⁴ my entertainment.⁵⁵ *Keep this secret for me*;⁵⁶ for if it should be known,⁵⁷ *I should be abused by*⁵⁸ every tasteless pedant, and every solid divine⁵⁹ in⁶⁰ England.

Whatever⁶¹ I have said to the disadvantage of⁶² these three Poems, holds much stronger⁶³ against Tasso's "Gierusalemme"; it is true, he has very fine and glaring rays of poetry, but then they are only meteors, they dazzle, [then] disappear, and are succeeded⁶⁴ by false⁶⁵ thoughts, poor "concelli", and absurd impossibilities; witness⁶⁶ the Fish and the Parrot, extravagances unworthy of an heroic poem

I have never read the *Lusiad* of Camoens, except⁶⁷ in a prose translation, consequently⁶⁸ I have *never read it*

at all,⁶⁹ so⁷⁰ shall say nothing of it;⁷¹ but the *Henriade* is all sense from the beginning⁷² to the end, often adorned⁷³ by the justest and liveliest reflections, the most beautiful descriptions, the noblest images, and the sublimest sentiments; not to mention⁷⁴ the harmony of the verse, in which *Voltaire undoubtedly exceeds*⁷⁵ all the French poets. Should⁷⁶ you insist upon an exception⁷⁷ in favor of Racine, I must insist,⁷⁹ on my part,⁷⁸ that he at least equals him.⁸⁰ What hero ever interested⁸¹ more than Henry IV, who, according to the rules of Epic poetry, carries⁸² on one great and long action, and succeeds in it at last?⁸³ What description ever excited⁸⁴ more horror than those, first of the massacre, and then of the famine at Paris? Was love ever painted with more truth and *morbidezza* than in the ninth book? Not better, to my mind,⁸⁵ even in the fourth of Virgil. Upon the whole,⁸⁶ with all⁸⁷ your classical rigor,⁸⁸ if you will but⁸⁹ suppose St. Louis a god, a devil or a witch, and that he appears in person and not in⁹⁰ a dream,⁹¹ the *Henriade* will be an Epic poem, according⁹² to the strictest statute laws of the *Épopée*; but in my court of equity⁹³ it is one as it is.⁹⁴

10. Voltaire and Shakespeare

M. Lounsbury¹ in his "Shakespeare and Voltaire" [makes the following statement]: "*Voltaire's knowledge of plays was derived*³ largely² from seeing them acted. During the time he was⁴ in England, it was mainly the tragedies of Shakespeare that were brought upon the stage.⁵ The two or three of his comedies which were performed at all⁶ were not only vilely⁷ altered, but even in their mutilated state⁸ were then performed but rarely. The English works of this sort⁹ which Voltaire heard of¹⁰ were the composition¹¹ of men

who belonged to the period¹² following the Restoration. The principal writers of them *whom he knew about*¹³ were Congreve, Wycherley, and Vanbrugh; it is of them alone he speaks with any fulness.¹⁴

The two pieces with which he was best acquainted were "Hamlet" and "Julius Cæsar".¹⁵ The latter,¹⁶ excellent as it is, is ranked¹⁷ by no one among the greatest of Shakespeare's productions; but for *some reason*¹⁸ it made upon Voltaire a *particularly vivid*¹⁹ impression. It may be²⁰ that he had seen it acted with peculiar power.²⁰ It may be that the absence²¹ from it of a love intrigue, *which*²² *he hated*²³ in tragedy, reconciled²⁴ him *in a measure*²⁵ to its *total disregard*²⁶ of the dramatic laws which he held so precious.²⁷ But to whatever²⁸ cause his interest in it was due,²⁹ it is the one of Shakespeare's works which on the whole³¹ plays the most prominent part³² in both³³ his critical and creative³⁴ writings, *so far as his relations with its author are concerned*.³⁰ It is the one to which he most frequently refers³⁶ *for the sake of conveying either praise or blame*.³⁵ Even when it did not inspire direct imitation, it suggested³⁷ scenes and plots³⁸ and *portrayals of character*³⁹ to pieces of his own."⁴⁰

Voltaire had read the works of English critics, among⁴¹ others "A Short View⁴² of Tragedy" by Rymer. The author of "Some Notes on Shakespeare", Edinburg 1867, says in speaking of Rymer's book: "Such⁴³ a publication was not necessarily any proper exponent⁴⁴ of the general feeling regarding⁴⁵ Shakespeare, yet, it may be taken⁴⁶ as expressing the view,⁴⁸ to some extent,⁴⁷ of scholarly⁴⁹ and fashionable society⁵⁰ in⁵¹ the reign of William and Mary, for Mr. Rymer was no hack writer,⁵² but, on the contrary a scholar⁵³ of some eminence."⁵⁴

Here is a short passage from Rymer: "The Italian painters are noted⁵⁵ for drawing the Madonnas by⁵⁶ their own wives or mistresses; *one might wonder*⁵⁷ what sort of person⁵⁸ Shakespeare found in⁵⁹ his days,⁶⁰ to sit⁵⁸ for his Portia and Desdemona; and *Ladies of a rank and dignity*,⁶¹ *for their place*⁶² in tragedy. But to him a tragedy [in] burlesque, a *merry tragedy*⁶³ was no monster, no absurdity, nor at all preposterous;⁶⁴ all colors are the same⁶⁶ to a blind man.⁶⁵ The thunder and lightning, the shouting⁶⁷ and battle and alarms⁶⁸ everywhere⁶⁹ in the play, may well keep⁷⁰ the audience awake; otherwise no sermon would be so strong⁷² an opiate."⁷¹

11. Voltaire apprend l'anglais en allant au théâtre

(Il admire la manière dont on traite les acteurs en Angleterre.)

L'actrice qui interprète avec art la création d'un poète en fait ressortir toutes les beautés. L'abbé Prévost s'en rendit compte quand il vit jouer Mrs. Oldfield; à partir de ce moment-là, il n'eut ni trêve ni repos qu'il n'eût appris l'anglais. On peut juger de son enthousiasme par le passage que cite M. Jusserand dans «Shakespeare* en France sous l'Ancien Régime»: «Il faut convenir que c'est une fille incomparable. Elle m'a fait aimer le théâtre anglais, pour lequel j'avais d'abord fort peu de goût. Charmé du son de sa voix, de sa figure et de toute son action, je me pressai d'apprendre assez d'anglais pour l'entendre et je ne manquai guère après cela d'assister aux pièces où elle paraissait.» Bientôt, la vue de l'actrice ne fut pas son principal plaisir; il s'enthousiasma pour l'art dramatique anglais et notamment pour Shakespeare. Les pièces anglaises pèchent

**Shakespeare en France sous l'ancien régime*, p. 156.

par défaut de régularité. «Mais, pour la beauté des sentiments, soit tendres, soit sublimes; pour cette forme tragique qui remue le fond du cœur et qui excite infailliblement les passions dans l'âme la plus endormie; pour l'énergie des expressions et pour l'art de conduire les événements et de ménager les situations, je n'ai rien lu, ni en grec ni en français, qui l'emporte sur le théâtre d'Angleterre.» Il reconnaît cependant que quelques pièces «sont un peu défigurées par un mélange de bouffonneries indignes du cothurne.»

Les Anglais surent reconnaître le mérite de Mrs. Oldfield; à sa mort, les plus grands honneurs lui furent rendus. Tandis qu'en Angleterre Mrs. Oldfield était ensevelie à Westminster Abbey, en France, Adrienne Lecouvreur qui, de son vivant, avait été non seulement appréciée comme actrice, mais, chose inouïe alors, recherchée dans le monde, Adrienne Lecouvreur fut ensevelie dans la rue au pied d'une borne, l'intolérance de l'Eglise empêchant qu'on n'ensevelît au cimetière les acteurs qui n'avaient pas renoncé à leur profession avant de mourir. Mis au ban de la société et de l'Eglise, les acteurs, aigris par les injustices, se vengeaient en traitant du haut en bas les auteurs qui avaient besoin d'eux. Voltaire ne se trouvait pas dans ce cas-là. Il avait été l'ami d'Adrienne Lecouvreur; indigné de voir comment on traitait les restes de cette grande actrice, il fit appel à l'opinion publique; dans son «Epître sur la mort d'Adrienne Lecouvreur», comparant la manière dont les deux actrices avaient été traitées, il s'écrie:

Ah! verrai-je toujours ma faible nation,
Incertaine en ses vœux, flétrir ce qu'elle admire;
Nos mœurs avec nos lois toujours se contredire,
Et le Français volage endormi sous l'empire

De la superstition?

Quoi! n'est-ce donc qu'en Angleterre
 Que les mortels osent penser?
 O rivale d'Athènes, ô Londres, heureuse terre!
 Ainsi que les tyrans vous avez su chasser
 Les préjugés honteux qui vous livraient la guerre.
 C'est là qu'on sait tout dire et tout récompenser,
 Nul art n'est méprisé, tout succès a sa gloire;
 Le vainqueur de Tallard, le fils de la victoire,
 Le sublime Dryden, et le sage Addison,
 Et la charmante Ophile, et l'immortel Newton,
 Ont part au temple de mémoire:
 Et Lecouvreur à Londres aurait eu des tombeaux
 Parmi les beaux esprits, les rois et les héros.

12. Comme traducteur, Voltaire est-il en avance ou en arrière de son temps?

Au XVIII^{me} siècle, les traducteurs n'ont pour les textes qu'un médiocre respect. Voyons si Voltaire qui, le premier, traduisit en français des passages de Shakespeare, est en avance ou en arrière de son temps? Il y a, dans les «Lettres anglaises» une double traduction du monologue d'«Hamlet»: l'une en prose, pour l'exactitude, l'autre en vers alexandrins. C'est à cette dernière que Voltaire donnait la préférence, comme étant la plus artistique. Elle s'éloignait beaucoup de l'original; d'autant plus que Voltaire prêtait gratuitement à Hamlet* ses propres doutes sur la justice divine.

Cette inexactitude, nous la retrouvons vers le même temps chez Pope, qui vraiment passe la mesure lorsque, en traduisant Homère, il cherche à l'embellir. Johnson fut de cet avis et le critiqua sévèrement. Madame Dacier, la

*«dieux justes, s'il en est.» (Monologue d'Hamlet.)

fidèle traductrice d'Homère, s'en indigna aussi; mais, somme toute, l'inexactitude est, chez les poètes, l'une des caractéristiques du temps.

Ce reproche, Mr. Lounsbury le fait à Voltaire et, pour l'accabler, il fait remarquer, que la traduction en prose ne fut intercalée dans le texte qu'à la seconde édition. Il avance ce fait pour prouver le manque d'intelligence de Voltaire en cette matière. Ne serait-il pas plus juste de reconnaître qu'il y a eu progrès chez Voltaire. Peut-être les acteurs, par leur interprétation de Shakespeare, l'avaient-ils mis à même d'en mieux saisir l'esprit! Le fait est que Voltaire fut le premier traducteur qui entrevit que le vers alexandrin, alors universellement employé en France, n'est pas ce qu'il faut quand on traduit Shakespeare.

13. Les acteurs que Voltaire connut en Angleterre

En parlant de Mrs. Oldfield, Voltaire écrit tantôt Ophile tantôt Ofil. Il ne faut pas oublier qu'il écrivait pour des Français qui ne savaient pas l'anglais; de là son orthographe phonétique. Son idée était que l'orthographe doit se rapprocher de la prononciation. Plus tard, lorsqu'il publia «Le Siècle de Louis XIV», il adopta la réforme de l'orthographe déjà proposée au XVII^{me} siècle par les Précieuses; il écrivit *ais* au lieu de *ois* quand on prononçait *ais*; on écrivait alors «Frenchman» François, bien que l'on prononçât comme aujourd'hui. Voltaire se demandait comment les étrangers pouvaient s'y reconnaître?

Pendant son séjour en Angleterre Voltaire connut et Mrs. Oldfield et Colley Cibber; celui-ci, qui était à la fois acteur et auteur dramatique, nous a laissé dans ses Mémoires

«Apology for my Life» un intéressant portrait de Mrs. Oldfield.

Colley Cibber n'avait pas pour les œuvres de Shakespeare l'espèce de vénération qu'ont aujourd'hui les Anglais; il n'avait pas hésité à remanier *Richard III* et le *Roi Lear*, et ces pièces, ainsi adaptées, se jouèrent en Angleterre pendant près d'un siècle.

14. Un talent primesautier

Adrienne Lecouvreur avait essayé de ramener sur la scène française le naturel; cependant, Marivaux la trouvait encore bien maniérée; seuls les Français qui allèrent en Angleterre comprirent, en voyant Mrs. Oldfield, le sens du mot primesautier.

15. Portrait of Mrs. Oldfield

By Colley Cibber

However Mrs. Oldfield seemed to come¹ but slowly forward¹ until the year 1703. Our company² that summer acted at [the] Bath, during the residence³ of Queen Anne at that place. At that time⁴ it happened⁵ that Mrs. Verbruggen by reason of her last sickness was left⁵ in London; and though most of her parts were of course to be disposed of, yet so earnest was the female scramble⁶ for them, that only one of them *fell to the share*⁷ of Mrs. Oldfield, that of Leonora in "Sir Courtly Nice", a character⁸ of⁹ good plain sense, but not over elegantly written.¹⁰ It was in this part Mrs. Oldfield surprised¹¹ me into an opinion of her having all the *innate powers*¹² of a good actress, though they were¹³ yet but in the bloom¹⁴ [of what they promised]. Before

she had acted¹⁵ this part, *I had so cold an expectation*¹⁶ from her abilities, that she could scarce¹⁷ prevail¹⁸ with me to rehearse with her the scenes she was chiefly concerned in¹⁹ with "Sir Courtly", which I then acted. However, we ran them over with a mutual inadvertency²⁰ of one another. I seemed careless,²¹ as²² concluding²³ that any assistance²⁴ I could²⁵ give her would *be to little or no purpose*,²⁶ and she²⁷ *muttered out her words in a sort of misty manner*²⁸ at my²⁹ low³⁰ opinion of her. But when the play *came to be acted*,³¹ she had a just occasion to triumph over³² the error of my judgment, by the amazement³³ that her unexpected performance awaked³⁴ me to; so forward and sudden a step³⁴ into nature I had never seen; and *what made her performance*³⁶ *more valuable*³⁵ was, that I knew it all proceeded³⁷ from her own understanding, untaught and unassisted by any one more experienced³⁸ actor. Perhaps it may not be unacceptable,³⁹ if I enlarge⁴⁰ a little more upon the [theatrical] character⁴¹ of so memorable⁴² an actress.

Though this part of Leonora in itself was of so little value⁴³ that when she got more into esteem⁴⁴ it was one of the several she gave away⁴⁵ to inferior actresses, yet it was the first *that corrected my judgment of her*,⁴⁶ and confirmed me in a strong belief,⁴⁷ that she could not fail in a very little time of being, what she was afterwards allowed⁴⁸ [to be], the foremost ornament of our theatre. Upon this⁴⁹ *unexpected sally*⁵⁰ then of the *power and disposition*⁵¹ of so unforeseen⁵² an actress, it was [that] I again took up the two first acts of the "Careless Husband", which I had written⁵³ the summer before,⁵⁴ and had thrown aside⁵⁵ in despair⁵⁶ of having justice done⁵⁸ to the character of Lady Betty Modish by any one⁵⁷ [woman then] among us, but Mrs. Oldfield having *thrown out such new proofs*⁵⁹ of [a] genius.

I was no longer *at a loss for support*,⁶⁰ my doubts were dispelled, and I had now a *new call*⁶¹ to finish it: accordingly⁶² the "Careless Husband" took its fate upon the stage⁶³ the winter following, in 1704. Whatever favorable reception⁶⁴ this comedy has met with from the public, it would be unjust in me not to place a large share of it to the account of Mrs. Oldfield,⁶⁵ not only from the uncommon⁶⁶ excellence of her action,⁶⁷ but even from her personal⁶⁸ manner of conversing. There are many sentiments⁶⁹ in the character of Lady Betty Modish, that I may almost say were originally her own,⁶⁹ or only dressed with a little more care⁷⁰ than when they negligently fell⁷¹ from her lively humor;⁷² had her⁷³ birth placed her in a higher rank [of life] she had certainly appeared in reality what in this play she only excellently acted,⁷⁴ an agreeable gay woman of quality, a little too conscious⁷⁵ of her own attractions.⁷⁶ I⁷⁷ have often seen her in private society⁷⁸ where women of the best rank might have borrowed some part of her behavior⁷⁹ without the least diminution⁸⁰ of their sense or dignity; and this very morning⁸¹ where I am now writing at Bath,⁸² November 14th,⁸³ 1738, the same words were said of her⁸⁴ by a lady of condition.

16. L'absolutisme de la Faculté

Charles de L'Orme, médecin de Marie de Médicis

Charles de L'Orme est un médecin du XVII^{me} siècle; mais évidemment il avait fait école, car on retrouve dans «Zadig» la critique du ton autoritaire que le médecin de la reine considérait comme une chose indispensable. Il ne faudrait pas croire cependant que Charles de L'Orme ne fût pas, sous bien des rapports, en avance de son temps;

il faut lui savoir gré d'avoir toujours insisté sur la nécessité de la propreté dans les pansements. Ce fut lui aussi qui eut l'idée de recommander l'usage interne des eaux de Bourbon. L'influence d'un autre médecin du XVII^{me} siècle, ami de Charles de L'Orme, se faisait encore également sentir. Nommer Guy Patin, c'est pour ainsi dire personnifier la saignée. Il poussait si loin la foi qu'il avait en ce traitement qu'il n'hésitait pas à saigner et des enfants de quelques mois, et des octogénaires, si bien que la rumeur publique l'accusa d'avoir, par des saignées intempestives, abrégé les jours de plusieurs membres de sa famille. D'abord, les médecins avaient été partagés d'opinion au sujet de ce traitement. Cela s'était vu lors d'une consultation générale qui eut lieu à l'occasion d'une maladie de Louis XIV. On saigna le roi en dépit de l'opinion de la majorité. Il guérit. Une autre fois, dans un camp, le roi eut la fièvre typhoïde; on le saigna de nouveau et, malgré ce traitement, il guérit encore. La saignée devint alors le remède par excellence, non seulement en France, mais jusque dans les Indes. Voici ce que dit Tavernier dans le récit du voyage qu'il fit en 1648: «Ce* n'est que récemment qu'on a trouvé le secret de guérir par de fréquentes saignées; on saigne, s'il le faut, jusqu'à trente ou quarante fois, tant qu'il sort du mauvais sang; ce qui me fut fait une fois que je me trouvais à Surat.»

Dans Gil Blas, le docteur Sangrado, qui recommande la saignée et l'eau chaude est le digne émule des deux médecins dont il vient d'être question. Cependant, Lesage avait trouvé son modèle parmi ses contemporains. «Il est impossible, dit Léo Claretie,† de ne pas reconnaître dans le

* *Voyage aux Indes*, vol. 1, p. 198.

† *Lesage romancier*, p. 381. (Armand Colin.)

vieillard créé par Lesage le docteur Hecquet, l'auteur du traité sur les *Vertus de l'eau commune*, de l'*Explication physique et mécanique des effets de la saignée et de la boisson dans la cure des maladies*. Et comme Lesage n'a pas voulu faire des portraits, mais bien créer des types d'après nature, rien n'empêche aussi de reconnaître le même Hecquet sous le pseudonyme transparent du docteur Oquetos.»

«Tandis* que le docteur Sangrado s'inonde l'estomac de pintes d'eau et veut convertir Gil Blas à la doctrine de la boisson fréquente, Lesage n'a qu'à rassembler ses souvenirs pour copier son modèle: il lui suffit de se rappeler, avec quelques phrases de Hecquet, ce qu'il a vu chez son protecteur et ami, l'abbé Jules de Lyonne, dont Saint Simon conte à deux reprises qu'il buvait «tous les matins plus de vingt pintes d'eau de Seine.»

Montesquieu, Lesage, Voltaire, Rousseau tournent en ridicule les médecins de leur temps: Voltaire fait exception pour un seul: le Genevois Tronchin, qui vint s'établir à Paris en 1766. Comme lui, Voltaire considère l'hygiène comme la chose la plus importante et il préconise les mesures préventives: l'inoculation, par exemple, coutume anglaise qu'il aida à introduire en France. Le développement des études scientifiques, en formant l'esprit d'examen, donna le coup de grâce à l'absolutisme de la Faculté.

Une curieuse estampe du temps, qu'on peut voir dans le livre de Paul Lacroix «*Usages et Costumes*»,† consacre le triomphe définitif de Tronchin: c'est «Le Médecin à la mode écrasant ses rivaux.» Tronchin, l'air placide, est à la portière de son carrosse dont les roues passent sur le corps de deux médecins tombés en travers de la chaussée; eux,

* *Lesage romancier*, p. 367. (Armand Colin.)

† *Usages et Costumes*, p. 285, P. Lacroix.

malgré tout, tiennent en leurs mains crispées des fleurs dont quelques unes, leur échappant déjà, jonchent le pavé. Groupées devant une boutique des femmes regardent, indifférentes.

17. Charles de L'Orme

After¹ his thesis, Charles de L'Orme did not wish² to publish anything [more]; but a few of his consultations written in Latin have been preserved; J. Bernier has given us some interesting³ information about him in his "Essays on Medicine", and what is more interesting in the end,⁴ the abbé de Saint-Martin has codified his *prescriptions and recipes*⁵ in⁶ one large volume very rare to-day⁷ which bears as a title:⁸ "An easy and tried⁹ method used¹⁰ by M. de L'Orme to live¹¹ almost to a hundred years."

It is indeed necessary¹² for a doctor to inspire¹³ blind confidence in those he treats; it is¹⁴ the only way to guarantee¹⁵ their absolute docility. That¹⁶ is why he should¹⁷ never allow his patients¹⁹ or²⁰ those who surround him to question¹⁸ anything. Not²¹ long ago an ambassador having asked a physician out²² of curiosity why the latter²³ had prescribed as many as²⁴ thirty-two bleedings,²⁵ the physician answered calmly:²⁶ "Sir, he would have²⁷ died had he²⁸ been bled²⁹ only thirty-one and a half³⁰ times", and he turned his back³¹ on him. This physician was a brute³² and it was enough³⁴ to kill the page,³³ but I highly approve³⁵ of him for having treated the ambassador so haughtily.³⁶ It is on account of such an indiscreet question that I broke³⁷ long ago with Queen Marie; we separated³⁷ at Aigre (Sour) in³⁸ Angoumois with words³⁹ which were⁴⁰ sourer than the name of the place where they were spoken.⁴¹ I hold so rigidly to my

opinion,⁴² that I fell out⁴³ with a bishop because he had expressed⁴⁴ an opinion *which differed from*⁴⁵ mine on [the subject of] a text from Saint Augustine and I demanded⁴⁶ that he apologize⁴⁷ before⁴⁸ I would consent to treat him again. I do not wish⁴⁹ that my patients should entertain⁵⁰ the opinion that they may appeal⁵¹ from my judgments, even on *subjects which do not pertain to*⁵² medicine;⁵³ I mean⁵⁴ to have despotic power over them, for at this price only am I sure⁵⁵ of curing them. Open this little box *that you have there*⁵⁶ by your side; it contains a preparation of antimony; you know that this wonderful remedy is nowadays⁵⁷ very much criticized;⁵⁸ *it might be compared to*⁵⁹ jansenism⁶⁰ [in the line] of medicine;⁶¹ not later than the day before yesterday, I was⁶² to give some⁶³ to one of my patients⁶⁴ who was in a most critical condition;⁶⁵ had I offered⁶⁶ him under its real name the discredited⁶⁷ remedy, he would have refused to take it, and he would have died; I told him it was a solution⁶⁸ of pearls that⁶⁹ angels had prepared for me; he looked at me with astonishment; my tone of authority and the gravity of my expression silenced⁷⁰ him and filled⁷¹ him with utmost respect; he took the antimony and he is cured.

But La Flèche is coming to tell me that the time has come⁷² for me to go⁷³ to the Viscount of Melun. Please help me to put on my fustian neckerchief.⁷⁴ Don't I look like a captain with his gorget?⁷⁵

THE ABBÉ

Exactly.⁷⁶ But is it true, Sir, that during the plague of 1619 you wore⁷⁷ a very odd⁷⁸ costume?

DE L'ORME

Nothing is truer, and had⁷⁹ they listened to me the contagion would not have caused so many deaths.⁸⁰ They ought⁸¹

to have buried the dead in remote places,⁷⁹ and disinfected the houses by kindling large fires. I recommended⁸⁰ that they drink pure water, eat good⁸¹ meat and⁸² refrain from all excesses, (and) that they avoid as much as possible keeping late hours,⁸³ and all worries⁸⁴ and sorrows; I prescribed to those who looked after⁸⁵ the sick to wear⁸⁶ serge or taffeta, or if they *were sufficiently well to do*⁸⁷ (to wear) morocco leather. *Strengthening my advice by an object lesson*,⁸⁸ I ordered⁸⁹ a morocco suit to be made and *I wore it all the time*.⁹⁰ I formed⁹¹ the habit of never going out without having garlic⁹³ in my⁹² mouth, rue in my nose, incense in my ears, [while]⁹⁴ my eyes [were protected by] spectacles. Later on I ordered a mask⁸⁹ of the same morocco as the coat and I had a nose half a foot long attached to it, in order to ward off⁹⁵ malignant air.

A little later, Charles de L'Orme calls upon⁹⁶ the Maréchale de Créquy who is suffering from indigestion.⁹⁷ De L'Orme prescribed a medicinal oil, the principal ingredient⁹⁸ of which is an old hen; it has⁹⁹ to be boiled alive, unplucked, along with laxatives¹⁰⁰ of all kinds. The poor maréchale makes an awful face,¹⁰¹ whereupon¹⁰² one of her attendants ventured¹⁰³ to say that a *nun who is also a nurse*¹⁰⁴ having recently given¹⁰⁵ this remedy to a patient, *the latter came near*¹⁰⁶ dying of it. "That proves," answers de L'Orme in a haughty manner, "that she would have died had she not taken it." And as the Maréchale worries¹⁰⁷ because her husband is subject to *fits of dizziness*¹⁰⁸ which cause her apprehension¹⁰⁹ lest he may have a predisposition to apoplexy, the physician reassures her: "Well, in the very unlikely"¹¹⁰ case of a stroke,¹¹¹ *place immediately on his head*¹¹² a pigeon cut in two."

18. Fontenelle et Voltaire, vulgarisateurs des sciences

Fontenelle, le neveu de Corneille, cet homme qui trouva moyen d'arriver à l'âge de cent ans en se perfectionnant toujours, représente mieux que personne, la théorie du progrès si chère aux hommes du XVIII^{me} siècle. Après sa mort, ses idées firent du chemin et Nietzsche, qui s'est rencontré avec lui sur plus d'un point, a pu écrire en marge d'un exemplaire de ses œuvres: «croissance après la mort». Du reste, de son vivant, son influence s'était étendue hors des limites de la France et Swift lui a emprunté l'idée d'un de ses contes philosophiques.

Défenseur des modernes dans la grande discussion qui passionna son siècle, il voyait dans le progrès des sciences une preuve de la supériorité des modernes sur les anciens; c'est pourquoi il entreprit d'intéresser le grand public aux études scientifiques. Il s'adressa tout particulièrement aux femmes, mettant en œuvre, pour les intéresser, toutes les ressources de son esprit inventif, fin et délié.

Les portraits de Fontenelle sont nombreux; si on tient à le connaître, on n'a que l'embarras du choix; mais encore faut-il faire preuve de discernement pour avoir de lui l'impression favorable que son mérite et le rôle qu'il a joué doivent lui assurer. Il ne faudra donc pas croire La Bruyère, qui a fait de lui un portrait aussi ressemblant que peut l'être une caricature. Que voulez-vous, il détestait la préciosité, même en ce qu'elle a de meilleur. Voltaire aussi est sujet à caution: il voulait qu'on prît la science au sérieux et ne pouvait pardonner à Fontenelle d'avoir, pour en parler, pris le ton de la galanterie; il n'hésita pas à le tourner en ridicule dans «Micromégas», quoique Fontenelle eût été son initiateur dans le domaine scientifique. Mais

Voltaire lui-même, en cette matière, est-il toujours aussi sérieux qu'il croit l'être? C'est ce qu'il faudrait demander à Buffon qui, plus d'une fois, eut l'occasion de le remettre à sa place quand il avançait des théories par trop aventurées, notamment en géologie. Alors, que dire de ces sévérités de la part de La Bruyère et de Voltaire? Qu'on n'est jamais trahi que par les siens; car, au point de vue intellectuel, et La Bruyère et Voltaire sont de la même famille que Fontenelle: la finesse, la délicatesse, l'esprit les caractérisent, mais inégalement; Fontenelle, en allant jusqu'à la subtilité, n'a fait que dépasser la mesure. Faudra-t-il donc renoncer à trouver un portrait ressemblant? Heureusement que les femmes, pour qui Fontenelle avait tant fait, surent lui rendre justice, et Mademoiselle Lecouvreur a laissé de lui un portrait vraiment sympathique. «Sa physionomie,» dit-elle, «annonce l'esprit; un air du monde répandu sur toute sa personne le rend aimable dans toutes ses actions; la probité, la droiture, l'équité composent son caractère; une imagination vive, brillante, des tours fins et délicats, une expression nouvelle et toujours heureuse en font l'ornement. La supériorité de son mérite se montre, mais il ne la fait jamais sentir.»

Quel charmant causeur que Fontenelle! Sans avoir l'air d'y toucher, il savait, en employant les comparaisons les plus simples, faire comprendre à des ignorantes les complications du mouvement de la terre: il prenait comme exemple la boule qu'on lance au jeu de quilles et qui, tout en tournant sur elle-même, s'avance vers le but. Pour mettre les sciences à la portée d'un public aussi neuf, il fallait faire preuve d'une admirable ingéniosité: c'est ce que Voltaire semble oublier. C'est d'autant plus surprenant que lui-même s'est essayé aussi à ce travail de vulgari-

sation dans le domaine des sciences; c'était le seul qui pût lui convenir; mais là, il était dans son élément. Fontenelle avait ouvert la voie et Voltaire, venant après lui, ne fit que continuer son œuvre. Il se chargea de faire connaître les découvertes de Newton. Sa langue claire et nette est un modèle de style scientifique.

Voltaire voulait être entendu de tout le monde; car, disait-il, «l'âme est un feu qui s'alimente de tout.» Il pensait que l'écrivain «devait se mettre à la portée des femmes, qui à leur tour, intéresseraient les enfants»; de cette façon le goût des sciences se répandrait rapidement. Pour arriver à son but, Voltaire employa tous les moyens; tantôt, suivant l'exemple du poète anglais Thomson, il célébrait les découvertes de Newton dans des vers qui sont parmi les plus beaux qu'il ait écrits, (Épître à M^{me} du Châtelet); tantôt, dans ses «Contes Philosophiques», il glissait des détails scientifiques qui devaient piquer la curiosité du lecteur; enfin, dans «Zadig» (épisode du Cheval et de la Chienne) il montrait l'usage pratique que l'on pouvait faire de l'observation scientifique appliquée à la recherche de la criminalité et il donnait le modèle gracieux et piquant d'un genre nouveau; ce genre, qui a aujourd'hui entièrement perdu son charme aristocratique, est connu en anglais sous le nom de «detective story».

19. Conversations on the plurality of worlds

I must warn those who are going to read this book, and who have some knowledge of the natural sciences, that [in writing it] I in no way¹ intended² to instruct them, but meant only to entertain³ them in presenting under a pleas-

anter and brighter⁵ form⁴ what they already know more thoroughly.⁶ I warn those to⁷ whom these things⁸ are new, that I thought I⁹ could both¹⁰ instruct and entertain them. The former¹¹ will defeat¹² my end, if they try to find here *something useful*;¹³ and the latter,¹¹ if they seek in it nothing but entertainment.¹³

I have introduced¹⁴ in these Conversations a woman *who is being*¹⁵ instructed and who has never heard¹⁶ anything about the subject.¹⁷ I thought such a fiction would help me to make¹⁸ my book more easily¹⁹ entertaining,¹⁹ and encourage the ladies²⁰ by this example of a woman who, though she never goes beyond the limits of a person who has not even the most elementary notions²¹ of sciences, is capable²² of understanding what she is told and of placing, without any confusion in her mind,²³ vortices²⁴ and worlds.

All I ask of the ladies in behalf²⁵ of this whole system of philosophy is the same [amount of] attention²⁶ they would have²⁷ to give to "the Princesse de Clèves", if they wanted²⁸ to follow²⁹ the plot³⁰ and understand all its beauties.

As³¹ for digressions, I have made a rather discreet³³ use³² of them; I have placed most of them²⁹ in the beginning of the work, because the mind is not sufficiently used to the main ideas I am introducing,³⁴ moreover I have chosen³⁵ them in the subject itself³⁶ or *in matters closely connected with*³⁷ my subject.

"All science,"³⁸ I said, "is based³⁹ upon these two things, the fact⁴⁰ that one has an inquisitive mind and an imperfect vision;⁴¹ for if your eyesight were better than it is, you would easily⁴² see whether or⁴⁴ not the stars are suns which give light⁴³ to so many worlds; and if, on the other hand,⁴⁵ you were less inquisitive, you would not care⁴⁶ whether you knew it or not, which [in the end] would amount⁴⁷ to the

same thing; but people wish to know more than they see; there is the rub.⁴⁸ *If at least*⁴⁹ one could see clearly what one sees, it would be *so much*⁵⁰ gained; but one sees things entirely differently from what they⁵¹ are. *That is why*⁵² true scientists spend their lives in *doubting what they see*,⁵³ and in trying to guess what they do not see; and this condition, it seems to me,⁵³ is not altogether⁵⁴ to be envied. I⁵⁵ picture⁵⁶ to myself Nature as a big stage,⁵⁷ similar to that of the Opera [House]. From your place⁵⁸ you do not see the theatre exactly as it is: the stage setting and the machinery have been⁵⁹ so disposed as to produce from afar a pleasing effect, and the wheels and weights which *set everything in motion*⁶⁰ have been hidden from your [sight]. That is why you little care⁶¹ to find out how everything works.⁶² There may be perhaps a stray⁶³ mechanic hidden *among the orchestra seats*,⁶⁴ whose curiosity is aroused⁶⁵ by a flight which seems⁶⁶ to him unusual and who is bound⁶⁷ to find out⁶⁸ how this flight was executed. You see plainly that this mechanic *has the same turn of mind as*⁶⁹ the philosophers. But the thing which *in the scientist's case*⁷⁰ adds to the difficulty is that the ropes of the machines which Nature offers to our view are perfectly well hidden and so well hidden that it has taken⁷¹ men a long time to find out what caused the motions of the Universe.

From the earth where we are, the most distant thing⁷² we see is this blue sky, this great vault to which the stars seem to be driven⁷³ like nails: they are called fixed stars because they do not seem to have any other motion save⁷⁴ that of their heaven which seems to be carrying them along [in its course] from East to West. Between the earth and this last vault of the Heavens are suspended at different heights the sun, the moon, and the five other astral [bodies]

which are called planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. These planets, not being connected⁷³ with the same heaven and having unequal⁷⁵ courses,⁷⁴ *do not appear in the same relative positions*⁷⁶ and are grouped⁷⁷ in varied ways; while the fixed stars are always in the same relative⁷⁸ positions. Now, the dipper,⁷⁸ which you see consists⁷⁹ of seven stars, has always been as it is, and it will remain like this [for a] long time [to come]; but the moon is sometimes⁸⁰ near the sun, sometimes⁸⁰ far removed from it, and so it is⁸¹ with the other planets. That is how things appeared to the ancient shepherds of Chaldea, whose⁸² long leisure [hours] gave them⁸³ an opportunity to make those first observations which were to be the basis⁸⁴ of astronomy; for astronomy originated⁸⁵ in Chaldea, just as geometry originated, so they say, in Egypt, where the inundations of the Nile which obliterated⁸⁶ the boundaries of the fields led⁸⁷ people⁸⁸ to invent exact measurements in order to tell⁸⁹ their fields [from those of their neighbors]. Thus, Astronomy is the daughter of Idleness;⁹⁰ Geometry⁹⁰ the daughter of [personal] Interest, and if we were to talk about poetry, we would in all likelihood⁹¹ discover that it is the daughter of Love." "I am glad," said the Marquise, "to have learned this genealogy of sciences and I clearly⁹² see that I shall have to limit⁹² myself to astronomy. Geometry, according to⁹³ what you tell me, would require a more mercenary⁹⁴ soul than I have,⁹⁴ poetry would require a more emotional⁹⁵ one, but I have all the leisure which Astronomy may require. Fortunately, *in addition to this*,⁹⁶ we are in the country and the life we lead here is wellnigh⁹⁷ pastoral; all [of] this is well suited to Astronomy."

FONTENELLE.

20. Voltaire crée l'histoire de la civilisation

Un des traits les plus caractéristiques du XVIII^{me} siècle en France est l'intérêt croissant que prennent les écrivains à la société dans son ensemble: les individus, même lorsqu'ils sont rois, sont relégués au second plan. Voltaire, voulant concentrer l'intérêt sur le développement de l'esprit humain, élargit merveilleusement le cadre de l'histoire en créant un genre nouveau: *l'histoire de la civilisation*. En étudiant la marche de l'esprit humain, ce que Voltaire s'attache à mettre en lumière, c'est *le progrès*.

21. Voltaire and M^{me} du Châtelet

The chief *personal*¹ fact of this time was the connection² which [Voltaire] formed with the Marquise du Châtelet, [and] which² lasted from 1733 to 1749. *She was to him*³ that important and peculiar influence which, in⁴ one shape or another, some⁵ woman seems to have been to nearly every foremost man.

It has been rather the fashion to⁶ laugh⁷ at the Marquise du Châtelet, for *no better*⁹ *reasons*⁸ *perhaps than* [that she], being¹⁰ [a] woman, studied Newton, and had relations called tender with¹¹ a man so little associated¹³ in common opinion¹² with tenderness as Voltaire.¹¹ The first¹⁴ reason is disgraceful,¹⁵ and the second is perhaps childish.¹⁶ Everything goes to *show*¹⁷ that Madame du Châtelet possessed¹⁸ a hardy¹⁹ originality of character, [of which] society²⁰ is so little likely²¹ to have²³ an excess that we can²³ hardly ever be thankful²⁴ enough for it. [There is] probably nothing

which would lead²⁶ to so rapid and marked an improvement in the world as a large²⁷ increase of the number of women [in it] with²⁸ the will and the capacity²⁹ to master³⁰ Newton as thoroughly as she did. And her³¹ long and sedulous affection for a man of Voltaire's exceptional quality, entitles³² her to the not too common praise of recognising³³ and revering intellectual greatness as it deserves.

The truly important feature³⁴ of the life which Voltaire led at Cirey was its unremitting diligence.³⁵ Like a Homeric³⁶ goddess, the divine Emily poured³⁷ a cloud [round] her hero. There is a sort of *moral climate*³⁹ in a³⁸ household, an impalpable, unsizable, indefinable *set of influences*⁴⁰ which predispose the inmates⁴¹ to industry and self-control,⁴² or *else relax fibre*⁴³ and *slacken purpose*.⁴⁴ At Cirey there was an almost monastic rule. Madame de Grafigny says that though Voltaire *felt himself bound by politeness*⁴⁵ to pay her a visit from time to time⁴⁶ in her apartment, he usually avoided sitting down, *apologetically protesting*⁴⁷ [how] frightful a thing is the [quantity of] time people waste⁴⁸ in talking,⁴⁹ and that waste of time is the most fatal kind of extravagance of which one can be guilty. He seems to have usually⁵⁰ passed the whole day at his desk,⁵¹ or in making physical experiments⁵² in his chamber. The only occasion [on] which⁵³ people met was at the supper at nine in⁵⁴ the evening. Sometimes after supper Voltaire would exhibit⁵⁵ a magic lantern, with explanatory comments⁵⁶ after the showman's manner,⁵⁷ in which he would convulse⁵⁸ his friends at the expense⁵⁸ of his enemies. But [after] the evening's amusement was over,⁵⁹ the Marquise would retire to work in her chamber until the morning, and, [when] morning came,⁶⁰ a couple of hours' sleep *was the only division between*⁶¹ the tasks of the night and the tasks of the day.⁶²

Madame du Châtelet, with⁶³ all her faults, was a far loftier⁶⁴ character than the *malicious gossips*⁶⁵ who laughed at her. Everything that occupied society was within her power, *except slander*.⁶⁶ She was never heard to hold up⁶⁷ anybody to laughter. When she was informed that certain people were bent⁶⁸ on not doing⁶⁹ her justice, she would reply that she wished⁷⁰ to ignore it.

Voltaire, by JOHN MORLEY.

22. Translation of a passage from Voltaire

By John Morley

Voltaire has told us the circumstances under¹ which he was led² to *approach the philosophy of history*.³ Madame du Châtelet, whose mind *would fain have reached*⁴ every kind of knowledge, but *was especially apt for*⁵ metaphysics⁶ and geometry, had *conceived an aversion for history*.⁶ "What does it matter⁷ to me," she would ask, "a Frenchwoman living on my estate,⁸ to know that Egil succeeded Haquin in Sweden, and that Ottoman was the son of Ortogrul? I have read with pleasure the history of the Greeks and the Romans; they *offered me certain great pictures*⁹ which attracted me. But I have never yet been able to finish any long history of our modern nations. *I can see scarcely anything in them but*¹⁰ confusion; a host¹¹ of minute events without *connection or sequence*,¹² [a] thousand battles which settled¹³ nothing. I renounced¹⁴ a study which overwhelms the mind without illuminating it." To this frank statement¹⁵ [of the case], to which so many thousands¹⁶ of persons in all epochs¹⁷ *would so heartily subscribe*,¹⁵ Voltaire replied by pointing¹⁸ out that perhaps the study of history would be *no waste*¹⁹ of time if, by *cutting away*²⁰ all the de-

tails of war, as tedious as they are untrustworthy,²¹ all the frivolous negotiations which have been nothing but *pieces of purposeless cheating*,²² all the minute details which stifle great events, and by retaining those which paint manners,²³ you made of this chaos a general and well-arranged²⁴ picture;⁹ [in] short, if you tried to disengage from the concourse of events the history of the human mind.

23. Lord Chesterfield to his son

Voltaire sent¹ me from Berlin his "Histoire du Siècle de Louis XIV". It came at a very proper time;² Lord Bolingbroke had just³ taught me how History should be read; Voltaire shows me how it should⁴ be written. I am sensible⁵ that it will meet⁶ [with] almost as many critics as readers. *Voltaire must be criticised*,⁷ besides, every man's favorite is⁸ attacked; for every prejudice is exposed,⁹ and our prejudices are our mistresses; reason is at best¹⁰ our wife, *very often heard indeed*,¹¹ but seldom minded.¹² It is the history of the human understanding,¹³ written by a man of parts.¹⁴ Weak¹⁵ minds will not like it, even though¹⁶ they do not understand it; which is commonly the measure of their admiration. Dull ones¹⁷ will want¹⁸ those minute and uninteresting¹⁹ details, with which most other histories are encumbered.²⁰ He tells me all²¹ I want to know and nothing²² more. His reflections [are] short, just, [and] *produce others in*²³ his readers. Free from religious, philosophical, political, and national prejudices, *beyond any historian I ever met with*,²⁴ he relates all²⁵ [those matters] as truly and as impartially *as certain regards*,²⁶ which must always be *to some degree*²⁷ observed, will allow him; for one sees plainly²⁸ *that he often says*²⁹ *much less than he would*³⁰

[say, if he might]. *He has made me much better acquainted with the times*³¹ of Louis XIV than the innumerable volumes which I had read could do;³⁰ and has suggested³² this reflection to me, which I had never made³³ before. — His vanity, *not*³⁵ *his knowledge, made him encourage all, and introduce many arts and sciences in his country.*³⁴ He opened in a manner³⁶ the human understanding³⁷ in France, and *brought it to its utmost perfection;*³⁸ his age³⁹ equalled in all,⁴⁰ and greatly exceeded in many things⁴¹ (pardon me, Pedants), the Augustan.⁴² This⁴³ was great and rapid; [but] *still it might be done,*⁴⁴ by⁴⁵ the encouragement, the applause, and the rewards of a vain, liberal and magnificent Prince. What⁴⁶ is much more surprising is that he stopped the operations of the human mind just where he pleased, and seemed to say, “thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.” For, [a] bigot⁴⁷ [to his religion and] jealous of his power, *free and rational thoughts upon either never entered*⁴⁹ into a French⁵⁰ head during⁴⁸ his reign; and the greatest geniuses that ever any age³⁹ produced,⁴⁹ *never entertained a doubt of*⁵¹ the Divine⁵² right of Kings, or the infallibility of the Church. Poets, Orators [and] Philosophers, ignorant [of] their natural rights, cherished⁵³ their chains; and blind active faith triumphed,⁵⁴ in those great minds, over silent⁵⁵ and passive reason. *The reverse of this*⁵⁷ *seems*⁵⁶ *now to be the case*⁵⁷ in France; reason opens⁵⁸ itself; fancy and invention *fade and decline.*⁵⁹

I will send you a copy⁶⁰ of this history by Lord Huntingdon, *as I think it very probable that it is*⁶¹ not allowed to be published and sold at Paris. Pray⁶² read it more than once, and with attention, particularly the second volume, which contains *short but clear accounts*⁶³ of many⁶⁴ interesting things *which are talked of by everyone,*⁶⁵ though fairly⁶⁶ understood

by very few. There are two very puerile affectations *which I wish this book had been free from*,⁶⁷ the one is, *the total subversion*⁶⁸ of all the old French orthography; the other is, *the not making use of any one capital letter throughout the whole book*,⁶⁹ except⁷⁰ at the beginning of a paragraph. *It offends my eyes*⁷¹ to see rome, paris, france, cæsar, henry the 4th, etc., begin with small letters,⁷² and I do not conceive, that there can be any reason for doing it half so strong as the reason of long⁷³ usage is to the contrary. This is an affectation below⁷⁴ Voltaire; whom I am not ashamed to say *that I admire and delight in*,⁷⁵ as an author, equally⁷⁶ in prose and in verse.

24. La méthode scientifique appliquée à l'histoire

For fifteen years Voltaire *kept challenging in a courteous manner*¹ Foncecagne[’s view] [on] the subject of Cardinal de Richelieu’s will; [Voltaire had questioned] *the authenticity of the document*.⁴ He *didn’t win in the contest*,² since he did not succeed in having his theory⁴ accepted.³ But *the fact which*⁵ has not been sufficiently emphasized⁶ is that his effort was not lost to science. Before him, Richelieu’s will appeared⁷ under⁸ very unfavorable⁹ circumstances, between the very apocryphal wills of Colbert and Louvois, without any guarantee of any kind. Voltaire *made it a rule*¹⁰ that the editor of a posthumous work should *give a strict account*¹¹ of the origin and fate of the manuscript, scholars¹³ expressed surprise *on hearing of such a rule*,¹² the learned Ménard¹⁴ used to say: “It is a new law”. But if Foncecagne silenced¹⁵ Voltaire, it was because he had satisfied¹⁶ his curiosity. Thanks to Voltaire, too, the affirmation of the will’s authenticity changed¹⁷ meaning. In order

to answer some objections, Foncecagne was obliged to admit that the Cardinal had had collaborators, that the document was not entirely in¹⁸ his [own] hand. In short,¹⁹ [thanks to] Voltaire's doubt the question²⁰ of Richelieu's will took a scientific form.

Hachette. *Voltaire*, by G. Lanson.

25. Lord Chesterfield to Madame du Boccage

London, November 26, 1750.

It is only six days ago that I received the letter and the package you kindly¹ sent me; [please] accept my thanks for both.²

The cases³ you wish me to settle,⁴ you bring *if I may express⁵ myself in technical terms⁵ "coram non judice"*, and *were I to pass judgment on them,⁶* one might reasonably⁸ appeal⁷ from my decision; never mind, everybody settles⁴ [cases]; often those who are less qualified⁹ are more authoritative,¹⁰ therefore I send you my verdict,¹¹ but *have it stricken¹²* from the registers whenever you please. In primis, I decide without any hesitation¹³ that Cardinal¹⁴ Richelieu is the author of his own will; and¹⁵ [all] Voltaire's pleading¹⁶ does not prove anything against [it]. The document *bears the stamp both of a¹⁷ prime minister and of a priest.*

I find it harder¹⁸ to settle the case *which is actually pending¹⁹* between the king and the clergy. The letters against the clergy are well written *and so are²⁰* the answers, but without settling²¹ [the case], *I side with²²* the king, and I consider the clergy of all religions as a body which has aims²³ and interests entirely distinct from those of mankind.²⁴ The most despotic kings *only claim sovereignty over²⁵* the persons²⁶ and the property²⁷ of man, but all²⁸ the clergy,

from the Grand Lama of Thibet to his Holiness at Rome and the Archbishop of Cantorbery in London, *try to extend their sways over*²⁹ the minds; [a] kind of despotism which is *all the more dangerous that when*³⁰ once established it *carries along*³¹ with it all the rest. Men and property are nothing but³² rags;³³ those gentlemen have your salvation³⁴ entirely in their [own] hands, and what³⁵ wouldn't one do in order to obtain it? Seven or eight consecutive centuries of priest rule³⁶ [combined with] ignorance have sufficiently proved³⁷ *this point*.³⁸ But the case³⁹ of the clergy seems to have been superseded⁴⁰ by that of the Estates of Brit-tany,⁴¹ which has the advantage of novelty. *This is not a small matter*,⁴² and in France less than anywhere else. Of course you understand⁴³ that, as [an] Englishman and [a] member of Parliament, I must be the very humble servant⁴⁴ of the Estates, therefore I shall keep silent⁴⁵ on this subject, *for fear my judgment might be challenged and I considered as a partial judge*.⁴⁶ *Once upon a time*⁴⁷ the horse called man to his rescue against the stag; man rode⁴⁸ him, helped him, subjugated him, and remained⁴⁹ his master. Men too when fighting against each other called kings to their aid. Hap-pily the horses *are still unconscious of*⁵⁰ their strength and the subjects [of] their natural rights; if they knew them, *how many riders would lose their stirrups and how many kings would fall from their thrones*.⁵¹ A certain amount⁵² of ignor-ance on such matters is perhaps for the best.

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

26. Influence of women

The fair¹ sex in France have also not a little contributed² to prevent the decline of taste and literature by expecting³

such qualifications⁵ in⁴ their admirers. A man of fashion⁷ in Paris⁶ must⁸ *be acquainted with the reigning modes*⁹ of philosophy¹⁰ as well as of dress,¹⁰ to be able to entertain his mistress agreeably. The sprightly¹¹ pedants are not to be caught¹² by dumb show,¹³ *by the squeeze of the hand or the ogling of a broad eye*;¹⁴ but must¹⁵ be pursued at once through all the labyrinths of the Newtonian system, or the metaphysics of Locke. I have seen as bright a circle of beauty at the chemical¹⁶ lectures of Rouelle, *as gracing*¹⁷ the court of Versailles. *And, indeed*,¹⁸ wisdom never appears¹⁹ so charming as when graced and protected by beauty.

To these advantages may²⁰ be added *the reception of their language*²¹ in the different courts of Europe. An author who excels is sure of having all the polite²² for admirers, and is encouraged to write by the pleasing expectations²³ of universal fame. Add to this, that *those countries who can make nothing good from their own language*²⁴ have lately begun to write in this, some²⁵ of whose production²⁶ *contribute to support*²⁷ the present²⁸ literary reputation of France.

GOLDSMITH.

27. Lord Chesterfield to his son

I hear¹ much of your conversing² with "*les beaux esprits*" at Paris; I am very glad³ of it; it gives a degree⁴ of reputation, especially at Paris; and their conversation is generally instructive, though sometimes affected. It must be owned that the polite⁵ conversation of the women of fashion at Paris, though not always very deep, is much less futile and frivolous than ours here. It turns⁶ at least upon some subject, something⁷ of taste, some point of history, criticism, and even philosophy, which, though probably not

quite so solid as Mr. Locke's, is however better, and more becoming⁸ rational beings, than our frivolous dissertations upon the weather or upon whist. Monsieur Duclos observes,⁹ and I think very justly,¹⁰ *qu'il y a à présent en France une fermentation universelle de la raison qui tend à se développer.*

LORD CHESTERFIELD.

28. De l'esprit scientifique et de sa portée

Au XVIII^{me} siècle, les crimes judiciaires sont nombreux non seulement en France, mais un peu partout, en Amérique comme ailleurs; si l'on en recherche les causes, on trouve infailliblement que le fanatisme est la racine du mal. A propos de l'affaire des sorcières de Salem, M. J. Fiske a écrit une page intéressante où il montre quel fut l'antidote qui ramena les esprits à des idées plus saines; selon lui, ce fut le grand développement que prit au XVIII^{me} siècle l'esprit scientifique.

29. Selection from "New France and New England"

*At the present day,*¹ among communities² like our own, *we may observe [a] wonderful change.*³ Among⁴ educated⁵ people the belief⁶ in witchcraft is practically extinct. It has not simply⁷ ceased to be taken⁸ seriously, but it⁹ has vanished¹⁰ from people's minds.¹⁰ We recognize¹¹ it as one¹³ of the grotesque features¹⁴ *in an Indian theory of things,*¹² or perhaps¹⁵ *we find it cropping out*¹⁶ among the odds and ends¹⁸ of diabolism that the negro mind retains¹⁷ from the old stock of African folk-lore,¹⁸ but we no longer associate¹⁹ such a

belief with civilized men, and *a good deal*²¹ of historical study *is needed*²⁰ to enable us to realize adequately²² its omnipresence only two centuries ago.²³

What has caused²⁴ this remarkable change in our mental attitude toward²⁵ witchcraft? Surely²⁶ not argument. Nobody has ever refuted the evidence that once seemed so conclusive in favor²⁷ of the belief. [For] the most part²⁸ we should now¹ regard that evidence as *not worth the trouble of refuting*.²⁹ Some powerful cause has made³⁰ our minds³¹ *insuperably inhospitable*³² to such sort³³ of evidence. That cause is the gigantic development of physical science³⁴ since the days³⁵ of Newton and Descartes. The minds³¹ of civilized [people] have become familiar³⁶ with the conception³⁷ of natural law,³⁸ and that conception³⁷ has simply³⁹ stifled the old superstition, as clover chokes⁴⁰ out weeds.⁴¹ It has been observed that the existence of evidence²⁷ in favor of witchcraft *closely depends upon*⁴² the disposition⁴³ to believe⁴⁴ it, so that when the latter⁴⁵ ceases, the former⁴⁵ disappears. Accordingly,⁴⁶ *we find no difficulty in*⁴⁷ understanding⁴⁸ the universality⁴⁹ of the belief until *quite modern times*.⁵⁰ The disposition⁵¹ to believe⁵² was one of the oldest inheritances of the human mind, while the capacity⁵³ for estimating evidence *in cases*⁵⁴ of physical causation is one of its very latest and most laborious⁵⁶ acquisitions.⁵⁵

JOHN FISKE.

30. Montesquieu

«Au sortir du collège, dit Montesquieu, on me mit dans les mains des livres de droit: j'en cherchai l'esprit.» Bien qu'il y eût dans sa famille une charge héréditaire qui devait

lui revenir, Montesquieu ne montra aucun goût pour le côté pratique de sa profession; mais cet esprit, qui l'avait attiré dès l'abord, devait vivifier et dominer toute son œuvre. Dès les «Lettres Persanes», son point de vue est nettement indiqué; il s'intéresse non pas à quelques hommes en particulier, mais à des sociétés entières, qu'il montre marquées au sceau d'une époque et d'une civilisation. Pour mieux arriver à son but et rendre, par le contraste des idées, le tableau de la civilisation française plus frappant, il met les critiques ou les éloges dans la bouche de deux Persans de caractères différents: l'un, gai et léger, s'attache à l'extérieur des choses; l'autre, plus grave, veut tout approfondir. Montesquieu a, avant tout, l'intention de critiquer et de faire comprendre aux Français le rapport qu'il y a entre étrange et étranger; il semble même qu'il ait voulu peindre cette étrangeté nuancée de ridicule qui a peut-être trouvé sa plus forte expression en anglais dans le mot «outlandish».

Après le succès des «Lettres Persanes», Montesquieu se mit à voyager. Il avait une théorie à vérifier, une théorie qu'il tenait du voyageur Chardin: jusqu'à quel point le climat, qui modifie le caractère des hommes, exerce-t-il son influence sur la formation des lois? Ses voyages terminés, il se tourna vers le passé pour découvrir les causes de la grandeur et de la décadence des Romains; cette forte étude lui fut une sorte de préparation à la composition de son grand ouvrage: «L'Esprit des Lois». Il a lui-même expliqué la méthode qu'il avait suivie en écrivant ce livre: «Plusieurs choses gouvernent les hommes: le climat, la religion, les lois, les maximes du gouvernement, les exemples des choses passées, les mœurs, les manières; d'où il se forme un esprit général qui en résulte.» Ces éléments qui composent toute société humaine, cet esprit général qui l'anime

sont connexes et solidaires. Ce n'est point l'agrégation fortuite de matériaux inanimés; c'est un organisme vivant. Les lois sont comme les nerfs de ce corps social; il faut qu'elles s'approprient à la nature des organes qu'elles animent et à la fonction de ces organes.

«Elles doivent être relatives au physique du pays, au climat glacé, brûlant ou tempéré; à la qualité du terrain, à sa situation, à sa grandeur; au genre de vie des peuples . . . elles doivent se rapporter au degré de liberté que la constitution peut souffrir; à la religion des habitants, à leurs inclinations, à leurs richesses, à leur nombre, à leur commerce, à leurs mœurs, à leurs manières. Enfin elles ont des rapports entre elles, elles en ont avec leur origine, avec l'objet du législateur, avec l'ordre des choses sur lesquelles elles sont établies. C'est dans toutes ces vues qu'il faut les considérer. C'est ce que j'entreprends de faire dans cet ouvrage. J'examinerai tous ces rapports: ils formeront tous ensemble ce que l'on appelle l'Esprit des lois.»

Tous les gouvernements l'intéressent comme sujet d'étude; un seul excite chez lui une admiration sans réserve, c'est le gouvernement anglais. Montesquieu, le premier, analysa la constitution anglaise. La profondeur d'esprit dont il fit preuve pourrait presque passer pour prophétique; il semble prévoir les difficultés que le gouvernement anglais devait avoir avec les colonies d'Amérique lorsqu'il dit: «Si le gouvernement statue sur la levée des deniers publics sans le consentement de ceux qui doivent les payer, il n'y aura plus de liberté.»

M. Sorel a expliqué l'influence exercée par les idées de Montesquieu sur la révolution.

«Tout Français éclairé, à la fin du dernier siècle, avait dans sa bibliothèque un Montesquieu, un Voltaire, un Rous-

seau et un Buffon. La convocation des Etats Généraux invitant chaque Français à donner ses idées sur la réforme de l'Etat, chacun recourut à ses livres et demanda à ses auteurs favoris de lui fournir des idées ou des arguments pour soutenir les principes qu'il voulait faire prévaloir. Rousseau et Montesquieu furent les plus consultés. Rousseau suscita plus de disciples, mais Montesquieu procura plus de citations: Rousseau ne développait qu'un système, le sien; Montesquieu exposait tous ceux que l'histoire avait recueillis. «*L'Esprit des Lois*» devint comme une sorte de *Digeste*; tous les partis en tirèrent des maximes et des précédents à l'appui de leurs vœux ou de leurs prétentions.»

Montesquieu a eu parmi les écrivains de la France moderne un continuateur: c'est Tocqueville, l'auteur de «*La Démocratie en Amérique*».

31. Le bon sens préférable à l'esprit

Montesquieu disait: «Quand j'ai voyagé dans les pays étrangers, je m'y suis attaché comme au mien propre»; et encore: «Quand je suis en France, je fais amitié à tout le monde; en Italie, je fais des compliments à tout le monde; en Allemagne, je bois avec tout le monde.»

32. Letter from Diderot to M^{lle} Volland

Paris, September 5, 1762.

While they were both travelling³ in Italy, President¹ de Montesquieu and Lord Chesterfield met.² These men were *just suited to each other*,⁴ *that is why*⁵ it did not take them long to become⁶ acquainted. *They were constantly discuss-*

ing⁷ the *comparative merits*⁸ of the two nations. The English nobleman [willingly] granted⁹ to the President that the French *were more witty*¹⁰ than the English, but, *on the other hand*,¹¹ [he maintained] that they had no common sense.¹² The President admitted¹³ the fact, but *wit, he said, was far superior to common sense*.¹⁴ This discussion lasted several days;¹⁵ they were in Venice. The President *went out*¹⁶ a great deal, he went everywhere, saw everything, *asked questions*,¹⁷ talked [to people], and [at] night *he would write down*¹⁸ *what he had noticed*.¹⁹ He²⁰ had been in for one or two hours and he was at his usual occupation, when an unknown [man] *asked to be admitted*.²¹ It was a Frenchman rather poorly²² clad who said to him: "Sir, I am your countryman. I have been living²³ here for twenty years, but I have always *maintained a friendly feeling for*²⁴ the French and occasionally I *have deemed myself fortunate*²⁵ when, *as it is to-day the case with you*,²⁶ I have had an opportunity to help them. *With the exception*²⁸ of prying²⁹ into state affairs, *a man*²⁷ may do everything [he pleases] in this country. An inconsiderate word on government affairs [however] would cost [a man] his head,³⁰ and you already have uttered³¹ over a thousand [such words]. Your conduct has attracted the attention³² of the State Inquisitors, you²⁷ are watched,³³ your²⁷ *footsteps have been dogged*,³³ *account has been taken of*³³ your plans, the Inquisitors do not doubt that you are writing.³⁴ I *know it as a fact*,³⁵ possibly to-day, possibly to-morrow, *your house will be searched*.³⁶ Sir, if you have written [anything], look³⁷ [at your papers], *keeping in mind*³⁸ that a harmless line wrongly interpreted might cost you your³⁹ life. This⁴⁰ is all I had to say. I have the honor, Sir, *to wish you good day*.⁴¹ If you should meet me on the street, *I beg of you as the only return for*⁴² a service which

I consider as being of some importance, not to recognize me, and, if perchance it were too late to save you, if⁴³ you should be captured, do not betray⁴⁴ me.” *After saying this,*⁴⁵ the⁴⁶ man disappeared leaving President Montesquieu in utter⁴⁷ consternation. His first impulse⁴⁸ was to hasten⁴⁹ to his desk, then taking the papers he threw them into the fire. No sooner⁵⁰ was this done when⁵¹ Lord Chesterfield returned. *He easily detected*⁵² his friend’s agitation;⁵³ *he asked about the possible cause of it.*⁵⁴ The President *told him all about the call*⁵⁵ he had received; [he told him of] the burnt papers and⁵⁶ [said also] that he had ordered his post chaise to be ready at three in⁵⁷ the morning, for his intention was to leave without delay a place⁵⁸ where a prolonged stay *were it to be ever so brief*⁵⁹ might prove fatal. Lord Chesterfield listened to him composedly and said: All right,⁶⁰ my dear President, but let us calm⁶¹ down [just for] a minute,⁶² in order to review quietly⁶³ the details of your adventure. — It is impossible *for me to be calm where my life is hanging in the balance.*⁶⁴ — But who is that man who exposes himself so generously to the greatest danger in order to save⁸⁵ you from it? That is not natural. *Even if he is a Frenchman,*⁶⁶ love for one’s country *does not impel any one to take such a dangerous step,*⁶⁷ and specially in favor of an *utter stranger.*⁶⁸ This man is not your friend? — No. — He was poorly clad? — Yes, very.⁶⁹ — Did he ask you to give him some money, a silver coin⁷⁰ as a reward for his advice? — No, not a farthing.⁷¹ — That is still more extraordinary. But, *how did he come by*⁷² all he told you? — *To tell you the truth,*⁷³ I don’t know. [He got it] from the Inquisitors, [directly] from them.⁷⁴ — *Not only*⁷⁵ is this Council the most secret there is⁷⁶ in⁹⁷ the world, [but moreover] *this man is not the kind of person who would be likely to come*

*near it.*⁷⁸ — But possibly it is one of the spies in their employ.⁷⁹ *It would take a more gullible person than I am to believe this.*⁸⁰ *Would they*²⁷ *take as a spy*⁸¹ a foreigner, and would this foreigner be clad like a tramp⁸² while doing a business⁸³ dirty⁸⁴ enough to be well paid, and this spy would betray his employers for *your benefit*⁸⁵ at the risk of being strangled if you were caught and were⁴³ to accuse him; or if you should escape and they⁴³ & ²⁷ suspect that you had been warned by him! Nonsense,⁸⁶ my friend, all this [is nonsense]. — But, what could it have been? I try in vain to discover it? . . .

If this fellow had been sent by a man who is occasionally [a little bit] mischievous;⁸⁷ a certain Lord Chesterfield who might have wished to show you by experience that an ounce of common sense is worth more than a hundred pounds of wit, for with common sense . . . Why! [you] rogue,⁸⁸ exclaimed the President, what a trick you played on me!⁸⁹ And my manuscript, my manuscript I⁹⁰ have burned!

DIDEROT.*

33. Montesquieu as historian

What¹ attracts Montesquieu to Rome and holds² him there is the study of the most complete phenomenon that history *brings within our range of observation.*³ Several phenomena of this kind⁴ studied *in the same way,*⁵ would give us the key to all others. Politics⁶ has its laws, experience brings them out,⁷ and history defines them. History is a science only⁸ *in so far as*⁹ it collects¹⁰ facts, classifies them, *shows their connection,*¹¹ and *indicates the conditions under which they are linked.*¹²

* *Lettres du XVIII^{me} Siècle.* Albert Cahen.

"As men," says Montesquieu, "have had at¹³ all times the same passions, the occasions which *bring about*¹⁴ great changes are different, but the causes are always the same." To discover¹⁵ these causes in Roman history is the main¹⁶ object of his book.

In the study of Rome he had had¹⁷ illustrious predecessors: Polybius¹⁸ whom he had closely¹⁹ analyzed, Tacitus who inspired²⁰ him *to such an extent that he*²¹ at times²² equaled him; Florus, his teacher of rhetoric and *his favorite author*,²³ had shown the sequence²⁴ and the results of Roman affairs; but the idea of a higher and general law had not entered their minds. Machiavelli in his "Essay²⁵ on Livy"¹⁸ still holds²⁶ the²⁷ same point of view.

No one [ever] equaled Bossuet in [showing] the development of Roman greatness; the majesty²⁸ of his style is in keeping²⁹ with the greatness of the subject.

. . . What he wishes to do is to *place in the hand of*³⁰ his reader "the thread of affairs". He *shows it plainly*³¹ entwining³² itself constantly in the midst of men and things, but the men who twist³³ this thread and entwine³⁴ it, do not direct it. From God³⁶ it comes³⁵ and by him it is set into motion. From him it comes, to him it returns . . . Montesquieu *did not pretend to be a theologian*,³⁸ *to him the subject of final causes was a closed book*.³⁹ Like Bossuet he *allows considerable freedom*⁴⁰ to men — their choice, their individual effort⁴¹ [counts for a great deal] in the *carrying out*⁴² of public affairs; like Bossuet he admits that in politics as⁴³ in gambling the most skilful one succeeds⁴⁴ *in the long run*"⁴⁵; *but in his opinion there are rules*⁴⁷ *to the game*⁴⁶ and a table on which it is played,⁴⁸ *skill itself comes into play*⁴⁹ under certain conditions, and none of *these things*⁵⁰ *is due to*⁵¹ chance. The intricacy⁵² of causes and effects forms the

woof,⁵³ the mutual attraction of men and ideas; the universal gravitation of events regulates the course of history. "Fate",⁵⁴ says Montesquieu, "does not govern the world; you may ask the Romans who had a continuous run⁵⁵ of prosperity when they governed themselves *according to*⁵⁶ a certain plan, and an unbroken⁵⁷ succession of misfortunes⁵⁸ when they followed⁵⁹ another [plan]. There are some general causes either⁶⁰ moral or⁶⁰ physical which are at work⁶¹ in every monarchy, they *cause its rise*,⁶² *its continuance or its fall*,⁶² all that happens is the result of these causes; and if the downfall of a state is brought about by the *fortuitous result*⁶³ of a battle, that is to say by a particular cause, [one may be sure that] there was a general cause which compelled⁶⁴ the destruction⁶⁵ of this state by a single battle; in short,⁶⁶ the general course⁶⁷ [of events] brings⁶⁸ forth as a regular thing all minor⁶⁹ accidents in its wake."⁶⁸ "It is *on account of*⁷⁰ this scientific view that Montesquieu *ranks as one of*⁷¹ the great masters of modern history. In literature, the perfection of his style has made him⁷³ one of our classics."⁷⁴

Hachette. *Montesquieu*, by A. Sorel.

34. Lord Chesterfield to his son

London, June 11, 1750.

My dear Friend,

The Président Montesquieu, *whom you will be acquainted with at Paris*,¹ after having *laid down*² in his book de "l'Esprit des Lois," the nature and principles of the three different kinds of government, viz: — the democratical, the monarchical, and the despotic, treats of the education necessary³ for each⁴ [respective form]. His chapter upon the education proper⁵ for the monarchical *I thought worth*⁶ transcribing

[and] sending to you. You will observe⁷ that the monarchy which he *has in his eye*⁸ is France.

* * *

Though our government differs considerably from the French, *inasmuch as*⁹ we have fixed laws and constitutional barriers for the security of our liberties and properties,¹⁰ yet the President's observations *hold pretty near as true in*¹¹ England as in France. Though Monarchies *may differ a good deal*,¹² Kings differ very little.¹³ Those who are absolute desire to continue so,¹⁴ and those who are not¹⁴ endeavor¹⁶ to become so;¹⁵ hence¹⁷ the same maxims and manners almost in all courts; voluptuousness and profusion encouraged,¹⁸ the one to sink¹⁹ the people into indolence, the other into poverty, consequently into dependency. *The court is called the world here, as well as at Paris*,²⁰ and nothing more is meant,²³ by saying²¹ that a man knows²² the world, than that he knows courts. In all courts you must expect²⁴ to *meet with*²⁵ connections²⁶ without friendship, enmities without hatred, honor without virtue, appearances²⁷ saved, and realities sacrificed; good manners with bad morals; and vice and virtue so²⁸ disguised that *whoever has only reasoned upon both*²⁹ would know³¹ neither when he first met³⁰ them at court. It is well³² that you should know the map³³ of that country, that *when you come*³⁵ *to travel in it you may do it with greater safety*.³⁴

35. L'Esprit des Lois

(1748)

Passage concerning slavery

If I were to defend¹ the right we have had to reduce the negroes to slavery,² this is what I would say:

The people of Europe having exterminated the people of America, they had to reduce³ the Africans to slavery³ in order to make use⁴ of them to clear⁵ such⁶ (large tracts) of land.⁵

Sugar would be too expensive if the plant which produces it were not cultivated by negroes.

The people⁷ about whom we are speaking⁸ are black from head to foot,⁹ and their¹⁰ nose is so flat¹¹ that it is almost impossible to pity them.

*It is almost inconceivable*¹² that God, who is a very wise being, could have¹³ placed a soul, specially a good soul, in a perfectly black body.

From the color of the hair, that of the skin may be inferred,¹⁴ and among¹⁵ the Egyptians, the best philosophers in¹⁶ the world, it was considered as being of so much consequence that they used to put¹⁷ to death all red-haired¹⁸ men which fell into their hands.

A proof that negroes have no common sense¹⁹ is that they *care more*²⁰ for a *string of glass beads*²¹ than for gold, which among civilized nations is of so much consequence.

We cannot possibly think¹³ that these people are men, because if we thought they were men, people would begin to think that we are not Christians.

*Narrow-minded people*²² exaggerate too much the injustice *which has been done unto*²³ the Africans. For, if it were such as they say, wouldn't it have occurred²⁴ to the princes of Europe, who make so many useless conventions among themselves, to make a general one in favor of mercy²⁵ and pity.

MONTESQUIEU.

36. Opinion des Contemporains

Sur "L'Esprit des Lois"

Le genre humain avait perdu ses titres, M. de Montesquieu les a retrouvés et les lui a rendus.

VOLTAIRE.

Son livre est mon bréviaire.

CATHERINE II.

De l'esprit sur les lois.

M^{me} DU DEFFAND.

37. Un admirateur de Montesquieu

Montesquieu est le seul des grands écrivains français du XVIII^{me} siècle qui ait excité l'admiration d'Horace Walpole; serait-ce peut-être à cause de l'horreur que leur inspirait à tous les deux l'esclavage? C'est en 1750 que Walpole écrivait la lettre qui suit; ce ne fut qu'en 1787 que Wilberforce, avec l'aide de Pitt, commença à agiter la question de l'abolition. Ce sujet, du reste, n'est pas le seul sur lequel H. Walpole ait eu des idées avancées: il fut aussi l'un des premiers à se prononcer en faveur de l'indépendance des colonies d'Amérique.

38. Letter from Horace Walpole

February 25, 1750.

[We have been sitting] this fortnight¹ on² the African³ Company. We, the British Senate,⁴ that temple of liberty

and bulwark⁵ of *Protestant Christianity*,⁶ have this fortnight *been considering methods*⁷ to make more effectual⁸ that horrid *traffic of selling negroes*.⁹ It has appeared¹⁰ to us that six-and-forty thousand of these wretches¹² are sold every year *to our plantations alone*!¹¹ *It chills one's blood*¹³ — *I would not*¹⁴ have to say *I voted for it*¹⁵ *for the Continent of America*!¹⁴ The destruction of the miserable inhabitants¹⁷ by the Spaniards was but a momentary¹⁸ misfortune that followed from the discovery of the New World, *compared with the lasting havoc which it brought upon Africa*.¹⁶ We reproach¹⁹ Spain, and yet *do not even pretend the nonsense*²⁰ of butchering²¹ these poor creatures²² for²³ *the good of their souls*.²⁴

39. De la formation du goût chez Montesquieu

«La société des femmes, a-t-il dit quelque part, gâte les mœurs et forme le goût.» On pourrait dire le contraire des femmes qu'il a connues: son sens moral, son goût s'y est affadi. C'est pour leur plaire qu'il a composé certains opuscles qui déparent ses œuvres, et qu'il a semé ses plus beaux chapitres de pointes licencieuses qui les gâtent. C'est ce qui faisait lire ses livres au beau monde d'alors; c'est ce qui risquerait d'en détourner le beau monde d'aujourd'hui. Non que ce monde soit moins frivole en ses pensées et se montre plus délicat en sa morale; mais la mode a changé, et la mode, en cette matière et en ce milieu, est le plus intolérant des censeurs.

Montesquieu aurait été profond et brillant, mais sec, si l'observateur, le curieux et le penseur ne s'étaient doublés en lui d'un artiste. Il n'a pas seulement le sens politique de l'antiquité, il en a le sens poétique: «Cette antiquité

m'enchante, et je suis toujours prêt à dire avec Pline: c'est à Athènes que vous allez, respectez les dieux.» Il goûte «cet air riant répandu dans toute la fable.»

Hachette. *Montesquieu*, by A. Sorel.

40. Invocation to the muses

Montesquieu intended to use this passage as an introduction to the second volume of his "Esprit des Lois".

"*Virgins* from the Pierian Mount,¹ do you hear the name I give you? Inspire me. The *race course I have to follow*² is [a] long [one]; I am *sad and weary*.³ Place in my mind the charm and the gentleness which *used to be mine*⁴ and which now has fled from⁵ me. If you do not wish to *make my hard task easier*,⁶ conceal the work itself, make⁷ it possible for [the reader] to gain⁸ knowledge without compelling me to impart⁹ it; and make it possible that while I think deeply¹⁰ I may (simply) appear¹¹ to feel. When the waters of your fountain spring¹² from [under] the rock you love, they do not rise into the air¹³ to drop down; they flow through the meadow."¹⁴

"In Montesquieu, the artist¹⁵ is as *hard to please*¹⁶ as the thinker. The literary composition of his work *preoccupies him fully as much*¹⁷ as the discovery¹⁸ of the principles and as the method. He wishes¹⁹ [to have] in his book a perfect order, but it must not be forced²¹ upon the reader, it must be insinuated;²⁰ he wishes to display a constant²² variety in the *forms of style*,²³ so that the reader may forget²⁴ the monotony of the road and the weight²⁵ of the luggage. His aim²⁶ is to make the reader think rather than read. He wishes to leave something for the reader to guess; it is a

way²⁷ of asking for his collaboration²⁸ and of flattering his perspicacity."

Hachette. *Montesquieu*, by A. Sorel.

41. Les physiocrates

L'influence exercée par Montesquieu sur les penseurs eut pour résultat la création d'une science nouvelle. Parmi ceux qui se réclament de lui, il faut placer au premier rang les économistes; l'un d'eux, Dupont de Nemours, dans un article* publié dans les «Ephémérides du citoyen», en 1769, rend hommage à Montesquieu. «Ce furent, dit-il, les éclairs de son génie, les charmes de son style, la séduisante variété des tournures fines, vives, saillantes qui caractérisent la multitude d'observations qu'il a rassemblées sur les lois, qui montrèrent à notre nation, encore si frivole, que l'étude de l'intérêt des hommes réunis en société pouvait être préférable aux recherches d'une métaphysique abstraite, et même plus constamment agréable que la lecture de petits romans.» Ceux qui reçurent de Montesquieu une forte impulsion intellectuelle se lancèrent dans deux directions opposées: les uns, ayant choisi l'érudition pure, tombèrent vite dans l'oubli; les autres, se souvenant que Montesquieu avait su joindre à la profondeur d'esprit le charme de la forme et un sentiment de fraternité internationale, se vouèrent à la recherche du plus précieux des secrets: le bonheur de l'humanité.

Celui qui d'emblée sut se faire écouter avait eu la main heureuse; le titre de son ouvrage indiquait nettement ses intentions: «L'Ami des Hommes» ne pouvait être qu'un messenger de bonnes nouvelles. Certes, on en avait besoin!

*Loménie. *Les Mirabeau*, II, p. 152.

On se ressentait encore de la terrible panique financière amenée par les spéculations de Law. Les traitants qui, avant l'arrivée du banquier écossais, avaient eu le monopole des opérations financières, se sentirent frustrés lorsque celui-ci essaya de former une sorte de *trust* dont ils étaient exclus; eux, pour se venger, firent passer à l'étranger l'argent monnayé; la dépréciation des billets de banque en résulta et quantité de gens furent ruinés. Les nobles qui avaient des terres n'en étaient pas plus riches pour cela; les paysans payaient généralement leurs redevances en nature, souvent en quantité infime; par exemple:* trois setiers de seigle et deux poules. Parfois ils refusaient tout payement et alors, il fallait faire au récalcitrant un procès, qui en entraînait d'autres. A un certain moment, M^{me} de Mirabeau eut jusqu'à soixante procès sur les bras. Il le fallait: renoncer à un droit, à un seul, c'était briser un chaînon et tout sacrifier. Les nobles, vivant à la cour, étaient obligés de s'en remettre à d'autres du soin de leurs affaires; grandes dépenses, petits revenus, tel était le résultat. Quoi de surprenant, en présence d'un tel état de choses, qu'on ait songé à prendre pour sujet d'étude: l'origine de la richesse, les moyens de l'augmenter et d'en généraliser la répartition? Pour traiter ces sujets facilement épineux, le marquis de Mirabeau dans «l'Ami des Hommes» prenait un ton de familiarité bienveillante, de bonhomie et de rondeur méridionales; son style, parfois archaïque, avait une originalité savoureuse, un pittoresque inattendu qui venait, tour à tour, toucher ou émoustiller le lecteur; il y avait des tableaux de mœurs qui étaient de petites scènes de comédie.

Dans «l'Ami des Hommes», le marquis de Mirabeau indiquait les grandes lignes de son système: que les nobles

*Loménie. *Les Mirabeau*, II, p. 40.

quittent la cour et que, retirés sur leurs terres, ils se consacrent au développement de l'agriculture; que, par l'irrigation des landes, par le dessèchement des marais, par des connaissances agronomiques plus étendues, par un outillage perfectionné, on tire des terres tout ce qu'elles peuvent rendre; qu'un sentiment de bienveillance règne entre le seigneur et les paysans: le travail en sera mieux fait car les petits ont besoin d'encouragement. «Tant que vous n'honorerez pas, dit-il, les basses classes de l'humanité, il est impossible d'y maintenir l'abondance nécessaire à l'émulation et au progrès.» Il va plus loin, et, critiquant le système colonial, il réclame en faveur des noirs; car, dit-il, «l'Europe ne saurait désormais être tranquille si l'on ne travaille à nous *fraterniser* dans le nouveau monde autant que dans l'ancien.» C'était instinctivement et en tâtonnant que le marquis de Mirabeau était arrivé à construire son système; mais, tel qu'il était, son livre eut un succès fou. Ce fut à *l'Ami des Hommes* que le poète Thomson dédia son poème des *Saisons*; à Paris, il y avait des boutiques qui avaient pour enseigne: à l'Ami des Hommes! Un autre économiste, inconnu encore, celui-là, qui s'était rencontré avec le marquis de Mirabeau sur plus d'un point, désira le connaître; c'était Quesnay, médecin de madame de Pompadour, celui qui bientôt allait devenir le chef de l'école, ou plutôt de la secte. Au nom d'économistes on joignit celui de physiocrates;* «de deux mots grecs qui signifient: l'un *nature* et l'autre *pouvoir* parce que les économistes prétendaient avoir trouvé le système de gouvernement et d'administration le plus conforme aux lois de la nature.» Mirabeau et Quesnay ne s'entendirent pas du premier coup. Dans une première entrevue orageuse, Quesnay essaya de faire comprendre

*Loménie. *Les Mirabeau*, II, p. 174.

à Mirabeau qu'il partait d'un point de vue erroné lorsqu'il disait que la population est la source des richesses; que, «c'était mettre la charrue avant les bœufs.» D'abord, le marquis ne voulut pas en démordre; mais, à la réflexion, des doutes lui vinrent et le soir du même jour il alla voir Quesnay et reprit la controverse: ce fut là, «qu'on fendit le crâne à Goliath».* Quand les deux hommes se quittèrent, l'alliance était conclue; le marquis de Mirabeau était prêt à mettre «sa popularité au service de son maître.»

Un sujet qui tenait de très près à l'agriculture était celui du commerce des grains. A cette époque, de province à province, les droits étaient exorbitants; «l'Ami des Hommes» était pour le libre-échange, non seulement dans l'intérieur de la France, mais de pays à pays; le même principe de liberté appliqué à l'industrie devait tendre à la débarrasser des entraves qui la gênaient et qui, à l'origine, avaient été imposées par les corporations, dans le but de la protéger. Pour manifester nettement leurs intentions, les économistes choisirent pour devise: «laissez passer, laissez faire.»

Les économistes formèrent un groupe à part, d'abord assez mal vu des encyclopédistes; Voltaire cependant était pour eux; et les autres finirent par se rallier. Evidemment, l'application immédiate de ces théories avancées était dangereuse, et on le vit bien lorsque Turgot, le plus célèbre des économistes, étant devenu ministre, voulut passer de la théorie à la pratique. Dans toute société, les intérêts des agriculteurs sont en opposition avec ceux des industriels. Si Voltaire était pour les économistes, c'est que l'industrie qu'il encourageait, la fabrication des soieries, pouvait se passer de protection; tandis que Buffon, qui essayait de perfectionner une industrie encore dans l'enfance, celle du

*Loménie. *Les Mirabeau*, II, p. 156.

fer, voyait ses efforts gravement compromis par l'ardeur intempestive des réformateurs. Les économistes eurent des disciples et même des adversaires parmi les étrangers; un Italien, l'abbé Galiani, écrivit, pour montrer le défaut de leur cuirasse, de charmants dialogues sur le commerce des blés, et B. Franklin, qui se trouva être en harmonie d'idées avec eux, devint leur ami.

Ces idées, qui firent tant pour précipiter la marche de la révolution, ont aussi exercé leur influence sur la littérature. On en trouve la trace jusque dans le roman. Lorsque J.-J. Rousseau, dans la «Nouvelle Héloïse», opposait à la vie artificielle des villes le charme de la vie des champs, il trouvait moyen de donner un aperçu du fonctionnement normal de l'échange des produits sans l'aide d'intermédiaires. En suivant ce principe on peut, avec des revenus modestes, vivre dans l'aisance; et le jardin de Julie, qui s'épanouit merveilleusement frais dans un lieu naguère aride et sablonneux, n'est-ce pas, sous sa forme poétique, le charmant miracle de l'irrigation? Cet arbre auquel le marquis de Mirabeau assimilait l'Etat et qu'il représentait comme revêtu d'un luxuriant feuillage, devait aussi porter sa fleur.

NOTE EXPLICATIVE.* «Je n'ai pas eu, Monsieur, sur vos écrits l'indifférence de M. Hume, et je pourrais si bien vous en parler qu'ils sont avec deux traités de botanique, les seuls livres que j'aie apportés dans ma malle.» (J.-J. Rousseau au marquis de Mirabeau, lettre datée de Wooton, le 31 janvier 1767.) Mirabeau ayant envoyé à Rousseau les livres de ses disciples, Rousseau refuse de se laisser enrégimenter; au cours de ses lectures il relève ces mots: «*despotisme légal*»; horripilé d'une aussi odieuse contradiction, il écrit au marquis: «Illustre ami des hommes et le mien, je

*Loménie. *Les Mirabeau*, II, p. 274.

me prosterne à vos pieds pour vous conjurer d'avoir pitié de mon état, et de laisser en paix ma mourante tête. Aimez-moi toujours, mais ne m'envoyez plus de livres; on ne se convertit plus sincèrement à mon âge.»

42. Fragment of "L'Ami des Hommes"

By the Marquis de Mirabeau

The state is a tree; the roots are agriculture, the trunk is population, the branches industry, the leaves are commerce and arts. The roots¹ supply² the tree with nourishing³ juices;³ they send forth⁵ an infinity of imperceptible root-lets and root hairs,⁶ *all of which*⁷ absorb the substance from the earth; this substance is changed⁸ (into) sap;⁹ the trunk grows stronger¹⁰ and sends⁵ forth a number of branches *the growth of which is proportionate to*¹¹ the trunk's strength, and (it) seems¹² as if the trunk might *do without*¹³ the roots, *as their work in its different stages*¹⁴ is so remote as to be almost unknown *to the trunk*.¹⁵ The nourishing¹⁶ sap ends its course by forming the leaves, the most brilliant and pleasing part of the tree. This part, the least durable, is more than any other exposed to the beating¹⁷ of storms;¹⁸ a scorching sun may¹⁹ dry it up and destroy it. If the roots keep their strength,²⁰ the sap will soon repair the devastation;²¹ on all sides,²² new leaves spring up, *taking the place of*²³ the ones which a malignant power²⁴ has scorched;²⁵ but if a harmful²⁶ insect has been pricking the roots in the bowels²⁷ of the earth, *it is in vain*²⁸ to expect²⁹ sun and dew to give life³⁰ to the dried up trunk; *the thing to do*³¹ is to attend³² to the roots, and make it possible³³ for them *to reach out and to recover*;³⁴ otherwise³⁵ the trunk will perish.

Passage cité dans *Les Mirabeau*, par Loménie.

43. Fragment of a letter from Grimm concerning the physiocrats

What contributed most [of all], as it proved,¹ to the warmth² of Franklin's welcome, was³ the interest taken⁴ in his writings on politics, or what we should call⁵ social economy.⁶ In the midst of the *rigmarole and gossip*⁷ of that immense⁸ [body of] correspondence which Grimm, Diderot, and others sent, twice a⁹ month, to different princes and noblemen¹⁰ of Europe, *there comes in*,¹¹ fortunately for us, at the date of the first [of] October, in this [very] year 1767, a curious essay on this passion. After¹² showing at some length that France always has some "object of predilection," *the writer says*,¹³ "At¹⁴ the [present] moment, political and rural economy, agriculture, the principles of government, are the objects of this national passion."

A society had been formed¹⁵ in Paris [which] *brought together*¹⁶ political economists and agriculturalists.¹⁷ "The two pillars of this society are the old Doctor Quesnay and the Marquis of Mirabeau, known¹⁸ as¹⁹ the Friend of Men, *from one*²⁰ of his [own] books."

The chiefs of the "Economists" tried to make²¹ a sect [of their adherents], with its ritual, its jargon, and its mysteries. So²² Grimm says, or his coadjutor. "Quesnay calls himself the master, the others call themselves the elders. Rural economy is called 'the Science' par excellence. They⁴ meet every Tuesday at Monsieur de Mirabeau's. They begin with a good dinner, then they labor;²³ they chop²⁴ and dig and drain;²⁴ they⁴ do not leave an inch²⁶ of ground²⁷ in France;²⁵ and when they⁴ have thus labored all day in a charming saloon, cool in summer and well warmed in winter, they²⁸ part²⁹ [in] the evening, well contented,

and with the happy satisfaction that they have made³⁰ the kingdom more flourishing." This society, or sect, published "The Ephemerides³¹ of a Citizen" of which Dupont was the editor. It continued³² several years. Their views³³ based on the theory that *the farmer is the only producer in society*,³⁵ are well stated in "*Physiocratie*"³⁴ [a book] by Dupont.

Grimm was so provoked³⁶ with them that he says he³⁷ should be glad some fine day to take³⁸ Monsieur de Mirabeau, "with³⁹ all his Tuesday," and⁴⁰ their mattocks,⁴¹ pickaxes, and carts,⁴² and carry⁴² them to the Landes de Bordeaux, or some other ungrateful soil,⁴³ that they might learn⁴⁴ [the business of] draining with other tools than tongues or pens. He says⁴⁵ they make a mystical science and a divine institution of agriculture, of which they are the theologians; that Monsieur de Mirabeau's "Tuesday" would be the Sorbonne of the *laboring man*,⁴⁶ and that this Sorbonne, as much as the other, would oppose what he calls "Philosophy". And Grimm closes⁴⁷ his rather⁴⁹ bitter account⁴⁸ [of them] by a prayer to the sovereign distributor of all light, that they might learn to read and talk intelligently⁵⁰ and to know what they are talking about.⁵¹

With all this sect of "Economists" Franklin became well acquainted.⁵²

Quoted in *Franklin in France*, by Edward E. Hale.

44. La physiocratie et la poésie descriptive

Aujourd'hui on ne songe plus, sous le rapport du mérite, à faire comparaison entre l'œuvre de Saint-Lambert, ce froid versificateur, et celle du poète Thomson; mais, en

poésie, Voltaire n'était pas bon juge. Mieux que lui, M^{me} du Deffand a apprécié à sa juste valeur ce pauvre Saint-Lambert; il est, dit-elle, «froid, fade et faux; il croit regorger d'idées et c'est la stérilité même.»

45. Fragment of a letter from Voltaire to M. Dupont

You give M. de Saint-Lambert the praise he has [a] *right to expect*¹ from a citizen and a writer like you. You are not like the man² who supplies³ Parisian news to foreign newspapers; who,⁴ among *a great many other erroneous statements*⁵ derogatory⁶ to the government, to the reputation of *private citizens*,⁷ and to the honor of literature, has recently expressed the opinion that the French poem on Seasons is inferior to Thomson's English poem. *If it were my place*⁸ to decide [between them], I would without the slightest hesitation give the preference to M. de Saint-Lambert. *To me, his poem seems*⁹ not only more pleasing but also [of] more *practical value*.¹⁰ The Englishman describes the seasons and the Frenchman tells what is to be done in each.¹¹ His pictures¹² seemed to me more touching and more pleasing; moreover [the fact that he has] overcome¹⁴ the difficulty of rhyme¹⁴ counts for a good deal¹³ [in my estimation]. Blank verse¹⁵ is so easy to make that there is hardly¹⁶ any merit in this kind¹⁷ [of composition]; the writer, to save himself from mediocrity and dull verbosity,¹⁸ is often obliged to resort¹⁹ to extravagant²⁰ ideas and expressions by which he tries *to make up for*²¹ the lack²³ of harmony.²² In the great age²⁴ of art, Boileau used to emphasize²⁵ *the necessity of a*²⁶ polished style. I think that M. de Saint-Lambert has perfectly fulfilled²⁷ this requirement.²⁸ Can anyone

describe with more accuracy²⁹ and dignity the work of the ploughman.³⁰

“Et le soc, enfoncé dans un terrain docile,
Sous ses robustes mains ouvre un terrain facile.”

See how he pictures [the sheperdess] with³¹ her lambs and her dog.

“La naïve bergère assise au coin d’un bois,
Et roulant le fuseau qui tourne sous ses doigts.”

*How much*³² these true and pleasing pictures are enhanced³³ by the contrast between these rustic³⁴ occupations and the luxury and idleness³⁵ *which prevail in*³⁶ cities.

“Tandis que sous un dais la Mollesse assoupie
Traîne les longs moments d’une inutile vie.”

Has Thomson,³⁷ whom I otherwise³⁸ thoroughly appreciate, *anything which could be compared to such passages?*³⁹

*To me it is a question whether*⁴⁰ a man of the North could⁴¹ sing [of] the seasons as well as a man born under happier climes.⁴² To a Scotchman like Thomson, the subject [matter is] inferior;⁴³ it is not the same nature he describes. The vintage,⁴⁴ [as it has been] sung by Theocritus, by Virgil, [is the] joyful occasion of the first festivals and of the first plays;⁴⁵ [as such] is unknown to the inhabitants of the 54th degree. They gather⁴⁶ without joy [a] wretched⁴⁷ [crop of] insipid and tasteless apples, while we see under our windows boys and girls [by the] hundred⁴⁸ dancing around the carts they have loaded⁴⁹ with delicious grapes: *that is why*⁵⁰ Thomson dared not treat a subject which to Saint-Lambert afforded an opportunity⁵¹ of drawing such pleasing pictures.

*A point in favor*⁵¹ of our poet philosopher *is that he addresses*⁵² not so much *the tillers of the ground*⁵³ as the land-

lords⁵⁴ who, living on⁵⁵ their estates,⁵⁶ can make their tenants⁵⁸ wealthier,⁵⁷ encourage them to marry, and, far from the insolent greed⁵⁹ and oppression of the ruling classes, be happy because of other [people]'s happiness; the poet rises⁶⁰ against the oppressors with praiseworthy⁶¹ courage and independence . . . Allow me now, Sir, to comment⁶² on the remark⁶³ you make *in connection with the thatch covered cottages*⁶⁴ of the laboring man, those *cabins*,⁶⁵ homes⁶⁶ of the poor; you condemn the use of these expressions in the poem of the Seasons which, *on the whole*,³⁸ you appreciate as much as I do. *You are perfectly correct in making the statement*⁶⁷ that a cabin cannot be the home⁶⁸ of *a man who goes into farming extensively*,⁶⁹ that he must have convenient *stables for the horses*⁷⁰ and [others]⁷¹ well-planned⁷² [for the cattle], large, well-built barns, cool dairies *with vaulted ceilings*,⁷³ etc. . . .

Certainly, Sir, and (in regard) to farming⁷⁶ no one⁷⁴ is a better authority than you; *in matters of detail*⁷⁵ no one has shown⁷⁷ better how precious a farmer must be to the state. I have the honor to be [a] farmer,³⁰ and I thank you for *the kind things you say about*⁷⁸ us; but since *we are speaking about*⁷⁹ farmers, notice the difference between the mansions⁸⁰ of the *farmers of the revenue*,⁸¹ who signed their contract in 1725, and the cottages of our [country] farmers; you will see that the words thatch-cottages, cabins, are only too suitable⁸² [in the case of the latter]; the homes of our *wealthiest farmers*⁸³ in Picardy as well as other provinces, have thatch roofs.⁸⁴

In my opinion,⁸⁵ nothing is more beautiful than a large *farm building*⁸⁶ through whose four main entrances⁸⁸ go in⁸⁷ and out wagons loaded with the products of the fields; the oak columns on which the whole framework⁹⁰ rests⁸⁹ are

placed at equal distances on granite pedestals; on [the] right and on [the] left *are to be seen*⁹¹ extensive stables.⁷⁰ One side is occupied by fifty well-kept⁹² cows with their heifers;⁹³ the horses and the oxen are on the other side; their fodder⁹⁴ drops into their cribs⁹⁵ from⁹⁶ extensive barns; the barns where the wheat is²⁶ threshed⁹⁷ are in the center⁹⁸ [of the building]; and you know that all these animals, *every one of whom has*⁹⁹ its own place in this large building, realize clearly that the fodder¹⁰⁰ and the oats it contains *are theirs by right*.¹⁰¹ South of these monuments of agriculture are to be found the barnyards¹⁰² and the sheepfold;¹⁰³ while to the north are the vinepresses,¹⁰⁴ the fruit cellars,¹⁰⁵ and the dairies;¹⁰⁶ on the east are the lodgings of the overseer¹⁰⁷ and of thirty servants; to the west are large [tracts of] meadow¹⁰⁸ and pasture [land] for all these animals, [the] comrades of man in his work. The trees of the orchard, loaded with¹⁰⁹ *fruits, both those that have stones and those that have seeds*,¹¹⁰ are another source of wealth. Four or five hundred beehives¹¹¹ stand¹¹² by the little brook which runs through the orchard; the bees give to the owner a large supply¹¹³ of honey and wax. . . .

Avenues of mulberry trees¹¹⁴ extend as far as you can see; the leaves *are food for*¹¹⁵ the precious worms which are not less useful than the bees.

Part of this precinct¹¹⁶ is enclosed¹¹⁷ by a *thick wall*¹¹⁸ of *neatly cut*¹¹⁹ hawthorn *as fragrant as it is pleasing to the eye*.¹²⁰ The yard and barnyard are surrounded by a *good-sized wall*.¹²¹ A good farm must¹²³ be of this type;¹²² there are a few to be found in the vicinity of the borderland where I live; and I may acknowledge without vanity that my farm¹²⁴ *is in some respect modeled*¹²⁵ after the one I have described; but, after all, are there many like this in France?

46. Méthode de Buffon

Buffon, l'homme des grandes vues d'ensemble, pense que l'on ne peut séparer l'histoire naturelle de l'homme et des animaux de celle de la terre. Ce point de vue grandiose semble avoir été entrevu poétiquement et en miniature par La Fontaine lorsqu'il dit, en parlant de « tout ce qui respire » : « Hôtes de l'univers sous le nom d'animaux. »

Buffon, qui n'aimait pas les poètes, faisait cependant exception pour La Fontaine. Cette prédilection s'explique : les deux écrivains avaient un trait en commun ; ils aimaient et comprenaient la nature en poètes, dans un temps où ce sentiment était chose rare. Inspiré par elle, Buffon sut donner à sa prose un tour poétique et grandiose.

Buffon, lorsqu'il fut nommé Intendant du jardin du roi, n'était pas préparé à sa tâche. Sans s'effrayer de l'immensité de l'effort, il entreprit, à une époque où tout était à faire dans le domaine des sciences naturelles, de débrouiller les grandes lignes directrices. L'intuition lui permit d'arracher à la nature plusieurs de ses secrets ; la profondeur de son génie lui fit entrevoir du coup la portée de ses découvertes.

Deux ouvrages de géologie, publiés à plusieurs années d'intervalle, nous font comprendre comment il procédait. Parfois, l'observation d'un petit détail lui ouvrait tout un horizon. Il savait qu'on trouvait sur les plus hautes montagnes des incrustations de coquillages ; ce simple fait l'amène à découvrir une partie de la vérité : selon lui, la formation de la terre est due à la double action des eaux, les continents sont des fonds de mer mis à sec qui seront de nouveau submergés quand le fond des mers actuelles se sera élevé jusqu'à surgir de l'abîme. Telle est sa première théo-

rie. Mais il ne s'en tient pas là. Suivant l'enchaînement naturel des sciences, il en vient à étudier la minéralogie; l'action du feu sur les minéraux lui fait compléter sa théorie: la formation de la terre est due à la double action du feu et des eaux. Il représente la terre comme étant à l'origine une masse incandescente détachée du soleil; à mesure qu'elle se refroidit, une croûte se durcit; les vapeurs en se condensant forment les mers. Buffon avait l'intention de refondre en un seul ouvrage la *Théorie de la Terre* et les *Epoques de la Nature*; mais, la mort étant venue interrompre ses travaux, le chevalier de Buffon, qui devait être son collaborateur, ne se sentit pas à la hauteur de la tâche et y renonça. Mieux que personne, Buffon a su résumer sa double méthode: «L'on peut dire que l'amour de l'étude de la nature suppose dans l'esprit deux qualités qui paraissent opposées: les grandes vues d'un génie ardent qui embrasse tout d'un coup d'œil, et les petites attentions d'un instinct laborieux qui ne s'attache qu'à un seul point.»

Buffon disait souvent: «Voilà ce que j'ai découvert avec les yeux de l'esprit.» Si parfois les expériences ont détruit quelques-unes de ses hypothèses, souvent aussi les expériences sont venues les confirmer. «Il avait jugé», dit Vicq-d'Azir, «que le diamant était inflammable, parce qu'il y avait reconnu comme dans les huiles une réfraction puissante. Ce qu'il a conclu de ses remarques sur l'étendue des glaces australes, Cook l'a confirmé. Lorsqu'il comparait la respiration à l'action d'un feu, toujours agissant; lorsque, pour expliquer la calcination et la réduction des métaux, il avait recours à un agent composé de feu, d'air et de lumière; dans ces différentes théories, il faisait tout ce qu'on peut attendre de l'esprit; il devançait l'observation; il arrivait au but sans avoir passé par les sentiers pé-

nibles de l'expérience; c'est qu'il l'avait vu d'en haut, et qu'il était descendu pour l'atteindre, tandis que d'autres sont à gravir longtemps pour y arriver.»

Aujourd'hui, on peut ajouter qu'il a devancé Darwin en émettant l'hypothèse de l'évolution, et Pasteur en émettant celle de la théorie microbienne.

47. Buffon

Born in Montbard, [on] the 7th [of] September, 1707, Buffon came¹ early² [in life to] Dijon with his father who had bought an *office of counsellor in the Burgundy Court of justice*.³ He studied⁴ at the Jesuit's school;⁵ the only thing one knows about this period of his life is that he was passionately⁶ fond of tennis⁷ and geometry. It was in Dijon that Buffon met⁸ two Englishmen. The Duke of Kingston *who, according to the wishes of his family, was traveling*⁹ with his tutor¹⁰ M. Hinckman, had stopped in Dijon with the intention¹¹ of pursuing later his journey¹² to Italy. He was *a rather wild young man*,¹³ in possession of an immense fortune, *inclined to go into every eccentricity of the time*,¹⁴ and ready to enter¹⁵ into any kind of adventure. Buffon met him at a friend's house¹⁶ where the Duke was sometimes invited,¹⁷ and he was introduced to him. There was little¹⁸ to gain for him by this new acquaintance;¹⁹ but the Duke was accompanied by his tutor,²⁰ [a] man of high merit, who had gathered²¹ on his different journeys valuable²² material; the sight of the different countries he had visited²³ had awakened in him an innate taste for natural history. Buffon became so intimate with the pupil and the master that *when they decided to proceed on their journey*²⁴ it was

agreed²⁵ that he would accompany his new friends. They left Dijon [on] the 3d [of] November, 1730 and *traveled through*²⁶ France as tourists, *stopping for long sojourns*²⁷ in the cities they *came across*²⁸ on their route. They reached Rome in the beginning of the year 1732. M. Hinkman, who was of German parentage,²⁹ was the friend of the studious³⁰ hours; he used to speak about natural sciences with an enthusiasm which was most catching.³¹ Buffon while listening to him felt another passion growing in him; *a passion for work and study*³² which was to lead him to glory. In Rome the three friends separated.

During the winter of 1736, the Duke of Kingston, who had been in the habit of stopping²⁷ in Paris for months [at a time], eloped³³ [with] M^{me} de la Touche, a friend of the Buffon family. Buffon did *all he could*³⁴ to keep his friends from entering³⁵ on such an adventure; it was in vain. They *sought refuge*³⁶ in England, taking along with them, one can³⁷ hardly believe it, . . . l'abbé Le Blanc who *assumed in the household*³⁸ of Lord Kingston [the functions] of chaplain. At the end of the year 1738, Buffon *met his friends again*³⁹ in London; l'abbé Le Blanc was still there. Buffon remained⁴⁰ in England over a year, and it was through⁴¹ [association with] the English aristocracy, into which he had been introduced by Lord Kingston, that he assumed⁴² his dignified manner of walking,⁴³ the rich elegance of his costume, the irreproachable correctness⁴⁴ in his manners, the constant nobility of bearing,⁴⁵ which *made Hume remark*,⁴⁶ when he saw him for the first time, that "he gave the impression⁴⁷ of [being] a field marshal of France rather than a literary man."⁴⁸

NADAULT DE BUFFON.

48

“Le génie est une plus grande aptitude à la patience.”

Buffon.

“In early¹ youth,” Buffon used to say, “I was *very fond of*² sleep; the best part of my time *was wasted that way*;³ poor Joseph was very helpful⁴ in enabling me to conquer⁵ this fatal⁶ habit. One day, dissatisfied with myself, I *sent for*⁷ him and I promised to give him a crown every time he would succeed in making me rise before six o'clock. The *next morning*⁸ he did not fail to awaken⁹ me at the appointed¹⁰ time; I answered by [using] *abusive language*;¹¹ he came the following day; I threatened him. ‘My poor Joseph, you have not earned anything,’ said I, when he *brought in*¹² my breakfast, ‘and I have wasted¹³ my time. You don’t *know how to go about it*;¹⁴ henceforth¹⁷ the reward¹⁶ is the *only thing you ought to keep in mind*;¹⁵ never mind¹⁸ my anger or my threats.’ The next day he came at the *appointed time*,¹⁹ asked²⁰ me to rise; he insisted; I begged²¹ him [to leave me], I told him I dismissed²² him, he was no longer in my service. Without allowing²³ himself to be intimidated by my anger, he used²⁴ [main] force and made²⁵ me rise. For a long time *there was no change*,²⁶ but my crown, which he received regularly, *made up*²⁷ every day for my *fit of bad temper*²⁸ on awakening. I am indebted to poor Joseph [for] three or four volumes of natural history.”

NADAULT DE BUFFON.

49. Parentés intellectuelles

Racine, Fénelon, La Fontaine étaient les auteurs favoris de Buffon. Au point de vue artistique, c'est sans doute à Racine et à Fénelon qu'il doit l'ampleur et la majesté

grandiose de son style si différent de celui des autres écrivains du XVIII^{me} siècle. Le fabuliste, par contre, semble avoir exercé une influence plus profonde; Buffon tient probablement de lui l'art merveilleux de représenter les animaux dans toute la vérité de leurs allures. Mais si, chez Buffon, l'artiste a gagné à la fréquentation du poète, il semble bien que le naturaliste n'a pas impunément contemplé le tableau des animaux formant une société organisée. En effet, Buffon ne peut se défaire de l'idée qu'il existe chez eux une hiérarchie; pour lui, malgré l'opinion contraire de Daubenton, le lion sera toujours le roi des animaux; et, s'il donne à la fourmi un vilain caractère, ne serait-ce pas parce que, tout au fond de sa mémoire, reste gravée en traits ineffaçables la sentence du poète:

"La fourmi n'est pas prêteuse:
C'est là son moindre défaut."

La tradition et l'imagination enchaînent par mille liens invisibles les esprits les plus indépendants. Buffon ne peut entièrement libérer son imagination du souvenir de la fable; non plus que Diderot, en dépit de ses efforts pour ramener les artistes à la vérité de la nature, ne peut entièrement secouer le joug des souvenirs mythologiques.

Dans son petit monde d'animaux, La Fontaine n'ayant pas donné à l'écureuil droit de cité, Buffon aura certainement pu décrire ce charmant petit animal sans la moindre arrière-pensée.

50a. Fragment of the address on reception into the Academy

Well written works are the only ones which will be *handed down to*¹ posterity. The amount² of knowledge,³ the *unusual*

*value*⁴ of the *subject matter*,⁵ and even the novelty of the discoveries are not a guarantee⁶ to immortality. If the works which contain them are *limited in their scope*,⁷ if they are written without taste, without dignity and without genius, they will *fall into oblivion*,⁸ because knowledge, facts, and discoveries can easily be taken away, transferred, and even improved⁹ by being *worked out*¹⁰ by more skilful hands. These things are outside¹¹ of man; style is the man himself. Therefore¹² style can neither be taken away, nor be transferred, nor *lose its value*.¹³

50b. From the Natural History

The squirrel¹⁴ is a pretty little animal that is only half wild who, *on account*¹⁵ of its gracefulness, its docility, and the very¹⁶ innocence of its habits,¹⁷ would deserve to be spared;¹⁸ he is neither carnivorous nor harmful,¹⁹ although he occasionally catches²⁰ birds; his usual²¹ food *consists of fruits*,²² almonds, hazelnuts, beechnuts,²³ and acorns;²⁴ he is clean, quick,²⁵ lively, very alert, very wide-awake, very industrious; his²⁶ eyes are full of fire, his²⁶ physiognomy is delicate, his²⁶ body is wiry,²⁷ his²⁶ limbs are very supple;²⁷ the prettiness of his face²⁸ is enhanced by a beautiful plume-like³⁰ tail which he raises³¹ above his head and under which he shades³² himself. He is, so to speak,³³ less [of a] quadruped than the others; he usually sits [up] almost erect,³⁴ using a *front foot*³⁵ as³⁶ [if it were] a hand to carry food to his mouth; instead of hiding under-ground, he is always [way above] in³⁷ the air; in³⁹ lightness he may *almost be compared to*³⁸ the birds; like them he lives⁴⁰ on the tree tops,⁴¹ goes from one end of the forest to the other, jumping from tree⁴² to tree, there too he builds his nest, picks

seeds, drinks the dew, and only comes down to the ground when the trees are shaken by violent winds. He is not to be found⁴³ in the fields, in *open places*,⁴⁴ in lowlands;⁴⁵ he never comes near houses; he does not take his abode⁴⁶ in copses,⁴⁷ but on the heights, in forests of full-grown trees, on the oldest of the finest growth.⁴⁸ He is even more afraid⁴⁹ of the water than of the ground, and it is said that when he has to cross it he uses a [piece of] bark⁵⁰ as a boat and his tail as a sail and rudder. He does not hibernate⁵¹ like the dormouse;⁵² he is at all times very wide-awake, and were one to touch ever so lightly⁵³ the foot of the tree on which he is resting, he would come out of his little lodgings,⁵⁴ flee to another tree, or hide himself *under the cover of*⁵⁵ a branch. He gathers⁵⁶ hazelnuts during the summer, fills up with them the holes and crannies⁵⁷ of an old tree, and in winter he *draws from*⁵⁸ these supplies; he also hunts for them under the snow which he *throws aside*⁵⁹ by scratching [the ground]. He has a⁶⁰ loud piercing⁶⁰ voice, even shriller⁶¹ than that of the martin,⁶² and *in addition to this*⁶³ he can, *with his mouth shut, produce a murmur, a sort of little grunting of dissatisfaction*⁶⁴ which he gives⁶⁵ whenever he is irritated. Too light to walk, he generally *covers the ground by little leaps*⁶⁶ and occasionally by bounds; his nails are so pointed and his motions are so swift that in an instant he will reach the top of a tree having as⁶⁸ smooth⁶⁹ a bark as the beech.⁶⁷

51a. To President de Brosses

February 16, 1750.

Although you have given¹ me your approbation in general, it seems to me you *make reservations on*² two points which

I consider as the best proven in the whole work: I mean my theory on generation, and the cause of the negroes' colour, which I *think is produced by*³ the effects of the east wind. If you take the trouble⁴ of reading what I said about it with a world's hemisphere⁵ before⁶ your eyes, I think you will not *have any more doubt*⁷ than I have *with regard to the explanations I have offered*⁸ *in connection with*⁹ the different colours of men.

51b. From the Natural History of Man

The¹⁰ description of all the recently¹¹ discovered peoples *leads us to think*¹² that the main differences, that is to say, the principal varieties, depend entirely on¹³ the influence of climate. One is to understand¹⁴ by climate, not only the higher or lower latitudes, but also the high or low¹⁵ lands, their vicinity¹⁶ or their remoteness from the seas, their exposure¹⁷ to winds and specially east winds, in short,¹⁸ all the circumstances which *working together contribute*¹⁹ to form temperature in every country, for this temperature which may be more or less hot or cold, damp or dry is the real cause not only of men's colour, but of the very existence of some species of animals and plants. . . . Everything, therefore, tends to prove that human kind²⁰ is not composed of species essentially different from each other, but that on the contrary there was originally but one species of men.

52. Buffon's collaborators

Gueneau de Montbeillard

Punctuality⁵ *was not to be*⁴ counted among¹ the many² [good] qualities which *were characteristic*³ [of] Gueneau de Montbeillard. M^{me} de Montbeillard, in the account⁶ *she*

*has given of*⁷ her husband's life, very cleverly⁹ attracts⁸ [our attention to the fact] that, as the main craving¹⁰ of his mind was independence, he unwillingly¹¹ submitted [to the necessity of] supplying¹² a given¹³ task and he reluctantly¹⁴ followed a line of work traced beforehand.¹⁵ His friendship for Buffon, to whom he knew *he was helpful*,¹⁶ induced¹⁷ him to give every now and then a certain number of articles which were to appear in the Natural History of Birds. Soon, however, he tired of this kind of work, and stopped¹⁸ producing¹⁹ it. In 1772 and in 1773, we find him in Paris working busily²⁰ on the history of birds. He writes to M^{me} de Montbeillard [on] the 22d [of] January, 1773: I worked yesterday on the birds [for] six hours [by the clock],²¹ and every day I shall do as much²² until I leave.²³

NADAULT DE BUFFON.

53. Fragments of letters to Gueneau de Montbeillard

October, 1766.

I send you back the jaw of the supposed¹ giant who was only a small donkey; for I have had under my² eyes the jaw of a tall man and that of a small donkey, and this one compares³ exactly⁴ with the latter. I thank you nevertheless for your kind attention.

Montbard, November 6, 1766.

You really⁵ should have *lost your way*⁶ between Chevigny and Montbard. For⁸ three days M. and M^{me} Allut have been with us.⁷ In my opinion,⁹ she is a charming little woman, and I am sure she would have been to your taste¹⁰ too. Choose, my dear Sir, the days which will suit you better,¹¹ but choose two days *in succession*,¹² for when one

meets only at dinner, one has not time either to digest one's enjoyment or *to talk over business*.¹³ Tell me, how far along¹⁴ are your birds, for every day I receive some sorts¹⁵ of imprecations from people who find it tiresome to receive two or three times a¹⁶ year coloured plates¹⁷ without having anything to read [along with it].

Good-bye, my dear, kind friend, etc.

Buffon.

54a. To abbé Bexon

Montbard, July 27, 1777.

I am very much pleased,¹ Sir, and even more than pleased, for the only criticism that could² be made is that you have worked too hard on the composition of the articles you have sent me. In general there is too much erudition; you [certainly] do not wish³ that the reader,⁵ when⁴ comparing these articles with those already printed, should find⁵ that a greater⁶ effort has been made² [in the line] of mythological science and erudition, subjects *which have very little to do with*⁷ natural history. I shall leave out⁸ a great deal of it, and I shall have the honor of sending you soon the first book⁹ corrected by¹⁰ my [own] hand; you will *guide yourself by it*¹¹ in the *subsequent numbers*.¹² But, I say it again, Sir, I am perfectly satisfied and you may go on; start¹³ [with] the heron family and *keep on through*¹⁴ the whole class of marsh¹⁵ birds. *It will take you a long time*,¹⁶ and I think *you have covered considerable ground*¹⁷ in¹⁸ the few weeks you have been¹⁹ at it. Try, Sir, to make all your descriptions from life;²⁰ that is essential, for [the sake of] precision. I am very much obliged²¹ to Mr. Daubenton Jr. for having *placed at your disposal all you needed*.²²

BUFFON.

54b. To abbé Bexon

Au jardin du Roi, December 5, 1777.

M. de Buffon sends²³ his compliments to abbé²⁴ Bexon; he begs him not to come until Sunday, because, to-morrow, Saturday, he would not be able to see him. It will give abbé Bexon so much more²⁵ time to classify the warblers.²⁶

BUFFON.

Buffon aime l'histoire des minéraux "pour les grandes vues dont elle est susceptible".

55a. To Gueneau de Montbeillard

January, 1781.

... Only³ in⁴ six months [from now] shall I be able¹ to *give to the printer*² the last volume of the History of the Birds, because it will still demand⁵ considerable work, and, moreover, I have *sent to the printer*⁶ a second supplement to the History of Quadrupeds. All this puts me back⁷ considerably in my beloved [study of] minerals, to which I should like to devote⁸ [my time] entirely;⁹ but that is not possible for the present.¹⁰

BUFFON.

55b. Buffon et Daubenton

The qualities which Buffon¹³ lacks,¹¹ *in order to carry out successfully*¹² the work he has undertaken, [he]¹³ finds them in¹⁴ the man he *has taken as an associate*¹⁵ [in] his work.¹⁶ If Buffon likes grand hypotheses, if he *finds pleasure in*¹⁷ the extensive¹⁸ combinations which are unfolded¹⁹ to his mind,²⁰ Daubenton [on the other hand] possesses a *genius for*²¹ observation, he knows *how to master*²² details; both men,²³ completing each other, follow a parallel course,²⁴ and

each one, by the nature of his researches, adds to the perfection of the work. No one, besides,²⁵ was a better judge of the tendencies of his mind than Buffon himself. "One may say that a love for nature studies requires²⁶ two seemingly²⁷ opposite qualities: the grand outlook²⁸ of an ardent genius which embraces everything at one glance, and the attention to small details, characteristic of a painstaking²⁹ instinct which centers³⁰ on one point only."

Daubenton Jr. ³¹ had³² an important share in the composition of the book on birds, both³³ by the conscientious notes [with] which he supplied³⁴ Buffon and³³ by the active supervision³⁵ that he exercised over the workmanship³⁶ of the drawings³⁷ which figure in this part of the natural history. Buffon, moreover,²⁵ has more than once praised his zeal and his ability. In the preface to the first volume on birds he says: "One will recognize everywhere the easy talent³⁸ of M. Martinet who has drawn and engraved all these birds, and the *intelligent and careful supervision*³⁹ of M. Daubenton Jr. who alone conducted this great undertaking. I say great, on account of the *numberless details*⁴⁰ which it requires,⁴¹ and of the continuous⁴² care which it demands;²⁶ more than eighty artists and workmen have been constantly employed for the last five years on this work, even though it was⁴³ reduced by us to a small number of copies,⁴⁴ and it was much to our regret that we did not *publish a larger number*⁴⁵ [of copies]."

NADAULT DE BUFFON.

56. Buffon and Needham

I had *become acquainted with*¹ M. Needham [who] is well-known² to all naturalists on account of the excellent micro-

scopical observations which he published³ in 1745. This clever⁴ man, *whose merit well deserves commendation*,⁵ had been sent to me by M. Tolkes, president of the London Royal Society; *having become his friend*,⁶ I thought⁷ I could do no better than share⁸ with him my ideas; and as he had an excellent microscope, more convenient and better than any one of mine, I asked him to lend it to me for my experiments.⁹

BUFFON.

57a. M^{me} d'Epinay to abbé Galiani

Paris, November 6, 1770.

Shall I speak to you about Buffon's² book¹ on birds⁴ *which is just out*?³ Pretty bold⁶ *is it not, on the part of a woman, an ignorant*⁵ [one too]. Never mind, I shall *whisper in your ear*⁸ *ever so low*⁷ what I think about it. I am afraid there is more poetry than truth in all this. *If we were to believe*¹⁰ his first discourse on man, [the latter] is¹¹ the first and most perfect among the animals. In his discourse on quadrupeds one could see that he *could hardly refrain from*¹² placing them, if not¹³ above man, at least *side by side with*¹⁴ him. *Do you remember*¹⁵ [how] he attributed to chance [the fact] that man held in his hand¹⁶ the scepter of the world? Now,¹⁷ in the discourse on birds, he says that with¹⁸ their vision¹⁹ [which is] the most perfect of their senses, and the quadrupeds with¹⁸ their sense of smell,²⁰ *they all*²¹ *can accomplish things*²² which are way above what man could ever do. *Then, you see*,²³ birds have over man the advantage of flight,²⁴ vision, and reproductive power.²⁵ Quadrupeds have *swiftness in running*,²⁶ sense of smell, and physical strength. All that is left²⁷ to man is: tact, taste, and reason. But afterwards he goes farther and says that, after having compared in each being²⁸ the results of mere feeling

and tried to find²⁹ the causes of diversity in instinct, he found the results were more regular, less capricious, less liable³⁰ to error than reason³¹ [is], in the only species³² who thinks it possesses³³ it. Then³⁴ man has nothing left²⁷ but tact and taste. And the first rhinoceros, had he chosen³⁵ *to take the trouble*,³⁶ might have come to a *more correct*³⁹ conclusion³⁷ *in regard to*³⁸ his nature²⁸ than [did] Buffon. I shall not *carry the insult so far as*⁴⁰ to take him at his word.⁴¹ *Of course*,⁴⁴ one [can] see⁴² *well enough*⁴³ *what he means*,⁴⁵ but why [should he] introduce⁴⁶ poetry and metaphysical suppositions where a mere statement⁴⁸ of facts is needed?⁴⁷ Why *should he consider*⁴⁹ himself as the panegyrist of every species he mentions?⁵⁰ We are as we are.⁵¹ He ought⁵² to show the chain of beings from the cold marble which is formed⁵³ in the depth of a cave⁵⁴ to the oak which lifts⁵⁵ its head in the clouds; then from the oak to the oyster, and from the oyster *show the whole succession of animals up to*⁵⁶ man, indicate⁵⁷ the limit of each being, and not allow them to encroach⁵⁸ on each other. If bears and vultures could understand his language, we would no longer be in safety on the earth. These apparent contradictions come *from the fact*⁵⁹ that there are things that he *gives to understand*⁶⁰ *because he dared not*⁶¹ tell⁶² them plainly, for when he writes he always sees Dr. Riballier at the bottom of the page, and, with such a picture⁶³ before one's eyes, it is very difficult to accomplish a truly great and philosophical work. *Nevertheless he is*⁶⁴ a great genius, and his eloquence is noble, simple and enchanting.⁶⁵

My dear abbé, since⁶⁶ you infer⁶⁷ from⁶⁸ the length of my letters *what my feelings*⁶⁷ [are], *it rests entirely with*⁶⁹ you, *should you take this one as a proof*,⁷⁰ to conclude that I adore you and, in truth, *leaving aside the length of it*,⁷¹ you would

*not be far from the truth.*⁷² Good-bye, however, until the next mail.

Dr. Riballier was the syndic of the *Theological School*⁷³ in⁷⁴ Paris, and royal censor; he could grant⁷⁵ or refuse the permit to print a new book. In one of his letters, President de Brosses says: "Buffon has just left me, he has given me the key to his fourth volume, *explaining how we are to understand the statements which are made for the special benefit of*⁷⁶ the Sorbonne."

57b. Note from Albert Cahen

Although there is⁹ more wit⁷⁷ than justice in M^{me} d'Epinaï's criticism — for no one⁷⁸ more than Buffon *made it*⁷⁹ *a point*⁸⁰ *to bring out*⁸¹ the superiority of human reason over animal instinct — one cannot deny⁸² that it is⁷⁹ indeed a rather wearisome method⁸³ in⁸⁴ Buffon, this *persistance in*⁸⁵ almost always speaking about animals or species, in⁸⁶ comparison with other animals and other species, as if he were *drawing some sort of a parallel*⁸⁷ after⁸⁸ the fashion of moralists or critics: hence⁸⁹ the character of *some of*⁹⁰ his descriptions which are like a lawyer's defence;⁸⁹ take for instance the comparison between the donkey and the horse, the goose and the swan, the elephant compared with⁹¹ the dog, the monkey with the beaver; one may *notice on the other hand*⁹² the *regular set of accusations*⁹³ which Buffon has drawn⁹⁴ against the tiger [shown in] opposition⁹⁵ with the lion, the vulture compared with the eagle, etc.

Lettres du XVIII^{me} siècle. A. Cahen (Librairie Armand Colin. Paris).

Passages cités dans les notes de la Correspondance de Buffon.
Nadault de Buffon

58. Opinion de quelques contemporains sur le style de Buffon

«L'oie nous fournit cette plume délicate sur laquelle la mollesse se plaît à reposer, et cette autre plume, instrument de nos pensées, avec laquelle nous écrivons ici son éloge.»

M^{me} Necker disait à propos de ce passage : «Quand on est obligé de dire une chose commune, il faut tâcher d'y jeter toujours un peu d'intérêt. C'est ainsi que M. de Buffon, dans son histoire de l'oie, ne nous a pas appris platement qu'elle donne les meilleures plumes; mais il dit : «cette plume avec laquelle j'écris son histoire.»

Cependant, tout le monde alors ne partageait pas cet avis; ce style, appliqué à de petites choses, semblait peut-être un peu pompeux, et Voltaire parlant de «l'Histoire naturelle» disait, non sans une pointe de malice : «pas si naturelle!»

«En 1795, dans un discours sur les véritables qualités que doit avoir le style du naturaliste, prononcé à l'Ecole normale, Daubenton attaqua Buffon. Lisant l'histoire du lion il modifia la phrase et dit : «Le lion n'est *pas* le roi des animaux. Il n'y a point de roi dans la nature» . . . La salle entière se leva au milieu d'applaudissements frénétiques.»

Vol. I, p. 139.

«Parlant des voyages de La Condamine dans le nouveau monde, Buffon hasarda cette espèce de prosopopée : «La Nature, accoutumée au plus profond silence, dut être étonnée de s'entendre interroger pour la première fois»; la grandeur de l'image saisit l'assemblée, elle en fit à l'orateur

l'application, et se recueillit avant d'applaudir; Buffon lui-même, dominé par l'émotion, dut s'arrêter avant de pouvoir achever son discours».

Correspondance de Buffon, I, 311. Nadault de Buffon.

OPINION DE J.-J. ROUSSEAU

«Je lui crois des égaux parmi ses contemporains en qualité de penseur et de philosophe; mais en qualité d'écrivain je ne lui en connais aucun, c'est la plus belle plume de son siècle.»

Vol. I, p. 220.

59. Admiration de Catherine II pour les écrivains français

On a soupçonné la politique de ne pas avoir été entièrement étrangère à l'ardente admiration que professait Catherine pour les écrivains français de son temps. En Europe, c'étaient eux qui dirigeaient l'opinion et il lui importait de les avoir de son côté dans l'éventualité du partage de la Pologne ou de la conquête de Constantinople; elle cherchait donc à donner l'impression que partout où elle régnerait, on verrait l'avènement de la tolérance et le triomphe de la civilisation. Si telle était réellement son intention, elle dut penser que ses efforts n'avaient pas été vains lorsqu'elle reçut de Buffon la lettre que voici:

60a. To Catherine II

Au Jardin du Roi, December 14, 1781.

Madam,

I have received through Baron Grimm the superb furs and the valuable^t collection of medals and large medallions

which Your Imperial Majesty has been kind² enough to send me. My first impulse,³ after [getting over] the thrill⁴ of surprise⁵ and admiration,⁵ was⁶ to press my lips on the beautiful and noble picture of the greatest woman⁸ in⁹ the universe, offering¹⁰ her the deepest sentiments of respect my¹¹ heart [can give]. Then, considering the magnificence of such a gift,¹² I thought it was a present from sovereign to sovereign and that, if it were from genius to genius, I was far below¹³ this celestial head, *which deserves*¹⁴ to rule over the whole¹⁵ world.

The chain [which was] found on the shores of the Irtych is a new proof of the antiquity of civilization in Her empire. The north, *according to*¹⁶ my Epoques, is also the cradle¹⁷ of the *greatest things*¹⁸ which nature in its primeval strength was able to produce, and *my wish is*²⁰ to see this beautiful nature and the arts come down a second time from the North to the South²¹ under the standard of such a powerful genius. The bust *on which M. Houdon is at work*²² will never express in²³ the eyes of my great Empress the keen²⁴ and deep feelings which fill my heart; seventy-four years stamped on this marble cannot but²⁵ *make it colder still*.²⁶ I beg²⁷ *to send along with it*²⁸ a living effigy; my only²⁹ son, [a] young officer in³⁰ the guards, will bring³¹ it to the feet of her august Majesty.

BUFFON.

60b. Reply from Catherine II

Count³² Buffon, I hasten³³ to announce by a courier the arrival of your son in Petersburg. I shall receive him as the child of a celebrated³⁴ man, that is to say,³⁵ without ceremony. To-night,³⁷ he will take³⁶ supper tête-à-tête with me.

60c. Notes et Eclaircissements

Par Nadault de Buffon

A Buffon ne revient pas l'honneur d'avoir le premier découvert l'identité de la foudre et de l'électricité; mais ce fut lui qui, le premier, tenta l'expérience du paratonnerre. Voici dans quelle circonstance. Franklin parlait dans ses lettres à Collinson de la possibilité de cette expérience; ces lettres furent publiées et connues de Buffon, qui établit aussitôt sur les toitures de sa maison une longue tige de fer, pointue à son extrémité supérieure, et isolée à sa partie inférieure avec de la résine. Dalibard, pressé par Buffon, en éleva une toute semblable à sa maison de campagne de Marly, et c'est chez lui que fut reconnue pour la première fois, le 10 mai 1752, la présence de l'électricité dans l'atmosphère. Le 19 mai de la même année, l'expérience réussit pareillement à Montbard. Franklin ne vérifia le même fait, au moyen d'un cerf-volant, que le 22 juin 1752. C'est donc à Buffon et à Dalibard que revient l'honneur d'avoir les premiers démontré par l'expérience l'identité de la foudre et de l'électricité annoncée comme une hypothèse par Franklin.

Hachette. *Correspondance de Buffon*, v. 1, p. 276.**60d. Franklin, Dalibard, and Buffon**

In a letter to Dalibard, Franklin alludes³⁸ to Priestley's "History of Electricity", which he had sent to the Frenchman.³⁹ *He says very handsomely:*⁴⁰ "Philosophy is already indebted⁴¹ to you *as being*⁴² the first of mankind that had the courage to attempt drawing lightning⁴³ from the clouds *to be subject to*⁴⁴ your experiments."

Dalibard himself,⁴⁶ with equal courtesy,⁴⁵ in describing his own experiment had said: "I have obtained complete satisfaction in following the road⁴⁸ which⁴⁹ Monsieur Franklin had laid down⁵⁰ for us".

Franklin in France, Edward Everett Hale.

61. L'Encyclopédie

Un édifice "de marbre et de boue". Voltaire.

Il y a tant d'encyclopédies aujourd'hui qu'il faut, pour se faire entendre, nommer chacune d'elles par son nom particulier; au XVIII^{me} siècle, on disait «l'Encyclopédie» tout court et ce fait seul en dit long. Avant Diderot, un dictionnaire représentait la somme des connaissances d'un seul homme. Quand un éditeur demanda à Diderot de traduire en français le dictionnaire de Chambers, une ère nouvelle allait s'ouvrir. Tirant parti d'une idée déjà ancienne, Diderot allait créer une chose éminemment moderne. Selon son propre témoignage, c'est au chancelier Bacon qu'il était redevable de l'idée qu'il se faisait d'une encyclopédie; mais la méthode qu'il employa pour mettre cette idée en œuvre était bien à lui: le travail devait être fait par des spécialistes et en collaboration. Les articles devaient avoir un cachet littéraire; c'étaient des essais, des parallèles, du nouveau sous toutes les formes. Doué d'un admirable génie d'improvisation, mais manquant de méthode, il ne pouvait à lui seul diriger l'entreprise; il eut recours à d'Alembert, le savant géomètre, qui composa le plan. Tous les grands écrivains du XVIII^{me} siècle collaborèrent à l'entreprise, à l'exception de Buffon qui, n'aimant pas les coteries, préféra se tenir à l'écart; Daubenton le remplaça. A une époque où la liberté de penser et d'écrire n'existait pas, les

Encyclopédistes imaginèrent de tirer parti de ce dictionnaire pour répandre rapidement, et par mille voies détournées, les idées qu'il eût été dangereux d'exprimer ouvertement. L'Encyclopédie contribua aussi à faire connaître les nouvelles théories scientifiques. Diderot fit une large place aux arts mécaniques et il se chargea lui-même de la rédaction de cette partie de l'ouvrage, qui offrait les plus grandes difficultés. Autre idée neuve: il fit intercaler dans le texte des planches explicatives. Cette partie de l'œuvre était si parfaite qu'elle a pu être utilisée même de nos jours. Ainsi, lorsque au siècle dernier, à l'époque connue sous le nom de Mid-Victorian, William Morris, se rendant compte du goût déplorable qui régnait en Angleterre, voulut faire revivre des arts disparus, il fut arrêté dès le début: on ne trouvait plus les machines dont il avait besoin! L'idée lui vint de consulter l'Encyclopédie et, d'après les données qu'il y trouva, il put mener à bien son entreprise. Cette importance donnée aux arts mécaniques, et le soin qu'on apporta à traiter ce sujet, marquent bien la révolution qui s'était produite dans les esprits: les littérateurs ne sont plus uniquement des hommes de lettres; avec l'étude des sciences, le travail manuel a repris ses droits.

Comme les Encyclopédistes étaient fort en vue, il y eut des gens influents qui, pour se faire une réputation d'hommes de lettres, recherchèrent l'honneur de collaborer; pour ne pas se mettre à dos des gens qui pouvaient nuire, on accepta trop souvent de piètres articles. On trouvait un peu de tout dans l'Encyclopédie: à côté de l'excellent, le détestable; de là le mot de Voltaire: «un monument de marbre et de boue».

62. From Frederick II to d'Alembert

You are surprised that in *Philopatros Letters* the encyclopædists are mentioned?¹ I have read in their works that love for one's country² is a prejudice which rulers³ have tried to sanction,⁴ and that in an enlightened age⁵ like ours, it was [high] time to get rid⁶ of such ancient and vain imaginations.⁷ For the weal¹⁰ of mankind¹¹ such⁸ assertions should⁹ be refuted. Finally, to clear¹² myself more fully, I must add that here in Germany people¹³ *hold the encyclopædists responsible for*¹⁴ all the works which are published in France by any *visionary writers*;¹⁵ I was addressing¹⁶ the public, therefore¹⁷ I had to use its language, for I hope you *do not hold me in such low esteem as*¹⁸ to believe that I *make no difference between*¹⁹ writers like d'Alembert and writers like Diderot, Jean-Jacques, and the so-called²⁰ philosophers which *throw their discredit on*²¹ literature.

63a. From Frederick II to d'Alembert

Many men have won battles and conquered provinces, but few men have written as perfect a book as the *Preface to the Encyclopædia*; and as a correct appreciation¹ of all branches of human knowledge² is a rare thing, and as it is a common thing to put to flight³ people who are already frightened,⁴ I believe, if we were to take a vote,⁵ the work of the philosopher would be considered⁶ superior to that of the military⁷ [man], if we look⁸ at it from the standpoint⁹ of usefulness; a full and minute¹⁰ knowledge² keeps [its value] for ever, books transmit it to the *remotest*¹² posterity, while the passing triumphs¹³ of a war, which interests only a few nations in a little corner of Europe, are no sooner¹⁵

passed than forgotten.¹⁴ And this is what¹⁶ the warrior and the philosopher (may expect).

63b. From Franklin to Arthur Lee

"If you think *we should account to one another for*¹⁷ our expenses, I have no objection, though *I never expected it*.¹⁸ I believe they¹⁹ will be found *very moderate*.²⁰ *I answer*²¹ mine [will], having had only *the necessaries*²² [of life], and purchased nothing besides, except²³ the Encyclopædia, nor sent *a sixpence worth*²⁴ of anything to my friends or family in America."

Franklin's Select Works, p. 80. Sargent.

Au dire des Français, Lord Chesterfield a plus d'esprit qu'eux.

64a. Lord Chesterfield to Madame de Tencin

London, August 2, 1742.

Struggling¹ between conflicting impulses,² I hesitated³ a long time before I made up my mind to send you this letter. I felt *how very indiscreet*⁴ such a step⁵ [would be] and what an advantage⁶ *I should be taking*⁷ of the kindness you showed⁸ me during my stay⁹ in Paris, *if I were*⁷ to ask for an additional¹⁰ [favor]; but, [being] strongly¹² urged¹¹ by a lady whose *worth shields her from refusal*,¹³ and on the other hand being inclined¹⁴ to *avail myself of*¹⁵ the first opportunity to revive¹⁶ a memory *which I prize so highly*,¹⁷ my inclination,¹⁸ as is generally the case, *got the better of*¹⁹ my judgment,²⁰ and I am gratifying²¹ my own wishes while *granting Mrs. Cleland's urgent request*,²² for this lady will have the honor

of handing²³ you my letter. I know from [personal] experience that this occasion²⁴ is not the first [of its kind]; your²⁵ reputation which extends beyond the boundaries of France has [frequently] exposed you [to similar importunities]. However, *I make bold to say*²⁶ that this request is not the most disagreeable. A superior merit, a *keen and delicately appreciative*²⁷ mind cultivated by the reading of what is best in all languages, great knowledge²⁸ of the world, have won²⁹ for Mrs. Cleland the esteem and consideration of all the cultivated people³⁰ in this country; that is why I [no longer have any misgivings]³¹ in having taken the liberty of recommending her to you, and I even feel assured³² that you *will not be displeased with me*³³ for what I have done. I must acknowledge, Madame, that it would be a *very poor return*³⁴ for all your kindness, to force³⁵ upon you my compatriots, people [who are] *poorly fitted to*³⁶ add³⁷ charm to society and who would seem very much *out of place*³⁸ in the *circle*³⁹ which, thanks to your merit and your good taste, has been gathered in your house, for you are the mainstay⁴⁰ and the [chief] ornament of it. Have no fear; I *shall not be indiscreet to such an extent*.⁴¹ Madame Cleland is English by⁴² birth only; she is French by regeneration, if I may use *such a*⁴³ term. If you should chance⁴⁴ to ask me why she singled me out to introduce⁴⁵ her to you, and why she thought I had acquired such a right, I shall have to confess that it is my own fault. In this respect, I have followed the example of most travellers, who on⁴⁶ their return *show off*⁴⁷ at home by bragging about their acquaintances⁴⁸ with *the most distinguished people*³⁰ in foreign countries. Kings, princes, ministers, have always *overwhelmed them with*⁴⁹ favors, and, thanks to their *sham pretences*,⁵⁰ they often acquire a consideration which they do not deserve. I prided myself

on the kindnesses you had shown me, I even exaggerated them if it were possible, and finally my vanity made me so bold⁵¹ as to pass⁵² myself off for your favorite friend, *a friend who was almost considered as a member of the household*;⁵³ Mrs. Cleland then taking me at my word⁵⁴ said: "I shall soon start for France; my highest ambition⁵⁵ would be, if possible, to have the honor of making M^{me} de Tencin's acquaintance; it will not cost you anything, since you *are on such intimate terms*⁵⁶ with her, to give me a letter of introduction."

I was in a predicament,⁵⁷ for, after what I had said, a refusal would have wounded⁵⁸ Mrs. Cleland's [feelings], and the confession⁵⁹ that I had no right to give the letter would have been too humiliating to my pride; so that I found myself driven⁶⁰ to run the risk, and I think I should have done it even if I had not the honor of knowing you at all, rather than *give myself the lie in*⁶¹ a matter⁶² [in regard to] which I was so sensitive.⁶² Having taken⁶³ the step, *I should like to avail myself of this opportunity*⁶⁴ to express to you my gratitude for the kindness you showed⁶⁵ me when I was in Paris, and I should also like to say all I think about the qualities which make your heart and your mind entirely different⁶⁶ from any others; but [such an undertaking]⁶⁷ *would be beyond my strength and would carry me beyond the limits*⁶⁸ of a letter. I wish⁶⁹ Mr. Fontenelle *would be kind enough*⁷⁰ to express⁷¹ these feelings for me. On this subject, I may say without vanity that we *think alike*,⁷² with this difference, however, that he could express my feelings with the delicacy and elegance which are his own and which are *exactly adapted to*⁷³ the subject. Allow me then, Madame, since I am entirely *lacking in*⁷⁴ these intellectual qualities,⁷⁵ to give you the assurance of the kind regards,⁷⁶ the esteem, the veneration

tion, and the respectful devotion⁷⁷ with which I shall remain as long as I live,

Yours.

64b. Madame de Tencin's reply

October 22, 1742.

I wish, my Lord, *you could have been present [at the time] your letter was received.*⁷⁸ It was handed²³ to me by M. de Montesquieu in the midst of the circle⁷⁹ you know. *The flattering things you said*⁸⁰ of me made me hesitate at first about showing it, but vanity always *finds an opportunity of getting full satisfaction.*⁸¹

Well, the letter was read and read [more than once]. "This English Lord makes fun⁸² of us!" exclaimed M. de Fontenelle, and the others joined⁸³ in. "*Let him be satisfied, if he so chooses,*⁸⁴ to be the first man in his country; he may have the depth and brilliancy of genius which characterizes the English, but he must not, in addition⁸⁵ to that, rob⁸⁶ us of our *charming and quaint ways.*"⁸⁷

The faultfinding⁸⁸ and murmuring of the crowd *would still be heard*⁸⁹ if, after having frankly admitted that you were to be blamed,⁹⁰ I had not bethought⁹¹ myself of reminding them of *your delightful manners and pleasing intercourse.*⁹² "Then he must come back to us!" they all said at once, "under that condition only will we forgive⁹³ him for being more witty than we are."

65. Madame du Deffand et Mademoiselle de Lespinasse

De l'aventure de ces deux femmes Mrs. H. Ward a fait un roman: "Lady Rose's Daughter". Ce récit reste bien au-dessous de la réalité. En effet, rien, dans la société con-

temporaire, ne saurait, même de très loin, donner une idée de ce qu'était un salon du XVIII^{me} siècle.

* * *

This arrangement of [a] life in common was made in 1754, and [it] lasted till 1764: ten years of *household companionship*¹ and concord; *a long period, longer*² than could have been hoped between two minds *so equal in quality*³ and [associated with elements] *so*⁴ impetuous. But finally, M^{me} du Deffand, who rose late and was never afoot⁵ before six in⁶ the evening, discovered that her young companion was receiving *in her private room*,⁷ a good hour earlier, most of *her own habitual visitors*,⁸ thus *taking for herself*⁹ the *first fruits*¹⁰ of their conversation. M^{me} du Deffand felt herself defrauded¹¹ of her most cherished¹² rights, and *uttered loud outcries*¹³ *as if it were a matter of domestic robbery*.¹⁴ The storm was terrible, and could only end¹⁵ in a rupture. Mlle de Lespinasse left the convent of Saint-Joseph abruptly; her friends clubbed¹⁶ together to make¹⁸ her a salon and a *subsistence*¹⁷ (in the) rue de Belle-Chasse. These friends were: d'Alembert, Turgot, the Chevalier de Chastellux, etc. — *in short*,¹⁹ the flower of the minds of that day.²⁰ From²¹ that moment, Mlle de Lespinasse lived apart and became, through her salon and through her influence on d'Alembert, one of the [recognized] powers of the eighteenth century.

SAINTE-BEUVE.

Letter from Madame du Deffand to Mademoiselle de Lespinasse.

I am *very glad*,²² my queen, that you are satisfied with⁶ my letters and also *with the course*²³ which you have taken [towards]²⁴ M. d'Albon. I am convinced²⁵ that he will resolve²⁶ on securing you a pension; *he would be stoned*²⁷ [by every one] if *he did otherwise*.²⁸ In case²⁹ he refuses,

you *obtain entire freedom*³⁰ to follow³¹ your own will, *which I trust*³² will bring you to live with me. But examine yourself well, my queen, and be very sure that you will not repent. In your last letter you wrote me very tender and flattering things; but remember that you did not *think the same only*³³ two or three months ago; you then confessed to me that you were frightened³⁴ at⁶ the dull life I made you foresee, — [a life which],³⁶ although you are accustomed to it, *would be*³⁷ more intolerable in the midst of the great world than it has been in your seclusion;³⁸ you feared, you said, to fall into a state of discouragement, which would render you intolerable,³⁹ and inspire me with⁶ disgust and repentance.⁴⁰ Those⁴¹ were your expressions; *you thought them a fault*⁴² which required my pardon, and you begged⁴³ me to forget [them]; but, my queen, it is not⁴⁴ a fault to *speak our thoughts*⁴⁵ and explain our dispositions; on the contrary, we can do nothing better. I shall treat you not only with politeness, but even with compliments before⁴⁶ the world, to accustom [it] to the consideration it⁴⁷ ought to have for you. . . . I shall not⁴⁴ have the air of seeking to introduce you; I expect⁴⁸ to make you desired; and if you know me well, you need⁴⁹ have no *anxiety as to*⁵⁰ *the manner in which*⁵¹ I shall treat your self-love. But you must rely⁵² on the knowledge that I have of the world.

There is a second point⁵³ on which I must explain myself to you; it is that the slightest⁵⁴ artifice, or even the *most trifling*⁵⁴ little art, if you were to put it into your conduct, would be intolerable to me. I am naturally distrustful,⁵⁵ and all those in whom I *detect slyness*⁵⁶ become suspicious⁵⁷ to me, to the point of no longer feeling the slightest⁵⁴ confidence in them. I have two intimate friends, Formont and d'Alembert; I love them passionately, but less for their

*agreeable charms*⁵⁸ and their friendship for me than for their absolute truthfulness. Therefore, you must, my queen, resolve to live with me with the utmost⁵⁹ truth and sincerity, and never use⁶⁰ insinuation, nor any exaggeration; in a word, never deviate, and never lose one of the greatest charms of youth, which is candour.⁶¹ You have much intelligence, you have gaiety, you are capable of feelings; with all these qualities you will be charming *so long as*⁶² you let yourself go⁶³ to your natural [impulse], and⁶⁴ are without pretension and without subterfuge.⁶⁵

Translated by Katharine Prescott Wormeley.

66. Horace Walpole

*The conformation of his mind*¹ was such that whatever was little seemed to him great; and whatever was great seemed to him little. Serious business was a trifle² to him,³ and trifles were his serious business. . . . He understood and loved the French language. Indeed,⁵ he loved it too well. His style is more *deeply tainted with*⁶ Gallicism than that of any other English writer [with] whom we are acquainted.⁷ *His composition*⁸ often⁹ reads,⁸ [for] a page together,¹⁰ like⁸ a rude¹¹ translation from the French. We¹² meet every minute¹³ [with such] sentences as these: "One knows what temperaments Annibal Caracci painted." "The impertinent personage!" "She is dead rich." "Lord Dalkeith is dead of the smallpox¹⁴ in three days."

His¹⁵ love of the French language was of a peculiar kind.¹⁶ He loved it as having been for a century the vehicle¹⁷ of all the *polite nothings*¹⁸ of Europe, as¹⁹ the sign by which the freemasons of fashion recognized each other in every capital from Petersburg to Naples, as¹⁹ the language of raillery, [as the language] of anecdote, [as the language] of memoirs,

[as the language] of correspondence. Its²⁰ higher uses he *altogether discarded*.²¹ The literature of France has been to ours what Aaron was to Moses, the expositor²² of great truths which would else have perished²³ for want²⁴ of [a] voice to utter²⁵ them with distinctness. The relation which existed between Mr. Bentham and M. Dumont is an exact illustration of the intellectual relation *in which the two countries stand to each other*.²⁶ The great discoveries in physics, in metaphysics, in political science, are ours.²⁷ But scarcely²⁸ any²⁹ [foreign] nation except²⁹ France *has received them from*³⁰ us [by] direct [communication]. Isolated by our situation, isolated by our manners, we found truth, but we did not impart³¹ it. France has been the interpreter between England and mankind.

In³² the time of Walpole, this *process of interpretation*³³ *was in full activity*.³⁴ The³⁵ great French writers *were busy in*³⁶ proclaiming through Europe the names of Bacon, of Newton, and of Locke. The [English] principle of toleration,³⁷ the [English] respect for personal liberty, the [English] doctrine that all power is a trust³⁸ for the public good were³⁹ making rapid progress. *There is scarcely anything*⁴⁰ in history *so interesting*⁴⁰ as that great stirring⁴¹ up of the mind⁴² of⁴³ France, *that shaking of the foundations of all established opinions*,⁴⁴ that uprooting of old⁴⁵ truth and old error. It was plain⁴⁷ that mighty principles⁴⁸ were at work, whether⁴⁶ for evil or for good. It was plain that a great change in the whole *social system was at hand*.⁴⁹ Fanatics of one kind might anticipate a golden age, in which men should live under the [simple] dominion⁵⁰ of reason, in [perfect] equality and perfect amity,⁵¹ without property, or⁵² marriage, or king, or God. A fanatic of another kind might see nothing⁵³ in the doctrines of the philosophers but⁵³ anarchy and atheism,

might *cling more closely*⁵⁴ to every old abuse, and might regret the good old *days when*⁵⁵ St. Dominic and Simon de Montfort put down⁵⁶ the growing⁵⁷ heresies of⁴³ Provence. A wise man would have seen with regret the excesses into which the reformers were running,⁵⁸ but he would have done⁵⁹ justice to their genius and to their philanthropy. He would have censured their errors; but he would have remembered that, as Milton has said, error is but opinion *in the making*.⁶⁰ While *he*⁶¹ condemned their hostility to religion, he would have acknowledged that it was the natural effect of a system⁶² under which religion had been constantly exhibited⁶³ to them in⁶⁴ forms which common sense rejected⁶⁵ and at which *humanity shuddered*.⁶⁶ While⁶¹ he condemned some of their political doctrines as incompatible with [all] law,⁶⁷ [all] property, and [all] civilization, he would have acknowledged that the subjects of Louis the Fifteenth had *every excuse which men could have for being eager*⁶⁸ to pull down, and for *being ignorant of the far higher art*⁶⁹ of setting up. While⁶¹ anticipating⁷⁰ a fierce conflict, a *great and wide-wasting destruction*,⁷¹ he would yet have looked forward to⁷² the [final] close [with] a *good hope*⁷³ for France and for mankind.

Walpole had neither hopes nor fears. Though the most Frenchified English writer of the eighteenth century, he *troubled himself little about*⁷⁴ the portents⁷⁵ which were daily to be discovered in the French literature of his time. While the most eminent Frenchmen were studying *with enthusiastic delight*⁷⁶ English politics and English philosophy, he was studying as intently the gossip⁷⁷ of the old court of France. [The] fashions and scandal *a hundred years old*⁷⁸ occupied him infinitely more than a great moral revolution which was taking place⁷⁹ *in his sight*.⁸⁰

67. Fragment of a letter from Horace Walpole

Portrait of Madame du Deffand

My dear old friend was charmed with your mention¹ of her, and made me vow² to return³ you a thousand compliments. She cannot⁴ conceive why you will not step hither. Feeling⁵ in herself no difference between the spirits⁶ of twenty-three⁷ and seventy-three, she thinks *there is no*⁸ *impediment to doing*¹¹ whatever one will, but⁹ the want¹⁰ of eyesight. If she had that,¹² I am persuaded no consideration would prevent her making me a visit¹³ at Strawberry Hill. She makes songs, sings them, and remembers all that ever were made; and, having lived from the most agreeable to the most reasoning age, has all that was amiable in the last,¹⁴ all that is sensible in this, without the vanity of the former,¹⁵ or the pedant impertinence of the latter.¹⁵ I have heard her dispute with all sorts of people, on all sorts of subjects, and never *knew her in the wrong*.¹⁶ She humbles¹⁷ the learned, sets right¹⁸ their disciples, and finds conversation¹⁹ for everybody. Affectionate as Madame de Sévigné, she has none of her prejudices, but a more universal taste; and, with²⁰ the most delicate frame, *her spirits hurry her through*²¹ a life of fatigue that would kill me, if I were²² to continue here. If we *return by*²³ one in the morning from suppers in the country, she proposes driving²⁴ to the Boulevard or to the Foire St. Ovide, because it is too early to go to bed. I had *great difficulty*²⁶ last night to persuade her, though²⁵ she was not well, not *to sit up*²⁷ till between two and three²⁸ for²⁹ the comet; *for which purpose*³⁰ *she had appointed*³¹ an astronomer to bring his telescopes to the president Hénault's, *as she thought*³² it would amuse me. *In short*,³³ her goodness to me is so excessive, that I feel unashamed³⁴

at producing³⁵ my *withered person*³⁶ in a round of diversions³⁷ which I have quitted³⁸ at home.³⁹ I tell a story;⁴⁰ I do feel ashamed, and *sigh to be in*⁴¹ my quiet castle and cottage;⁴² but *it costs me many a pang when*⁴³ I reflect⁴⁴ that I shall probably never have resolution enough to take another journey to see this best and sincerest of friends, who loves me as much as my mother did! But *it is idle to look forward*⁴⁵ — what is next year? — a bubble that may⁴⁶ burst for her or me, before even *the flying*⁴⁷ year can⁴⁸ *hurry to the end*⁴⁹ of its almanack! . . .

Horace Walpole and his World, edited by L. B. Seelye, p. 107.

68. Fragment of a letter from Grimm*

As M^{me} Geoffrin's sole aim in life was to do good,¹ she would have liked² [to have] everybody resemble her; but [in] her charity³ she was discreet. She used to say: "When I *speak of*⁴ the condition⁵ of an unfortunate [man] for whom I should like to secure some assistance,⁶ I do not *break the door open*,⁷ I *stand close by*⁸ and wait until people are willing⁹ to open [it for me]." Her illustrious friend, Fontenelle, was the only one with whom *she adopted a different policy*.¹⁰ This philosopher, [who was] so renowned¹¹ for his wit and so much *sought after*¹² on account of his *pleasing manners*,¹³ who had no vices and was almost faultless¹⁴ because he had neither warmth nor passion, *had consequently only*¹⁵ feeble¹⁶ and rather lifeless¹⁷ virtues which in order to become active¹⁸ needed to be roused,¹⁹ but *that was all they needed*.²⁰ M^{me} Geoffrin used to go to²¹ her friend and, with feeling and with sincere interest, pictured to him the condition²² of the unfortunate [people] she wished to help. "They are very

**Mémoires de Marmontel*, ed. Barrière, Introduction, p. 9.

much to be pitied,"²³ the philosopher would say then, *after adding*²⁴ a few words on the condition²⁵ of humanity, he²⁶ would talk of something else.

M^{me} Geoffrin used to let him go [on], but on leaving she would say: "Give me fifty crowns²⁷ for these poor people." "You are right," Fontenelle would say. And *after fetching*²⁸ the fifty crowns would give them to her, and never again mentioned *the gift*,²⁹ *perfectly willing*³⁰ to do the same thing *again*³¹ the next day, provided he were reminded³² of the need.²⁹

Writing* to Lady Hervey in October, 1765, Horace Walpole says of Madame Geoffrin, "She has one of the best understandings I ever met, and more knowledge of the world."³³ Yet³⁴ his account³⁵ of her, *on the whole*³⁴ confirmed Lord Carlisle's opinion that she was "the most impertinent *old brimstone*."³⁶ (Lord Carlisle to George Selwyn, December 26, 1767.)

Passages à traduire à livre ouvert)

69. The Salons

If you were [a] man of letters and more or less [of a] philosopher, here is the regular employment you could make of your week: Sunday and Thursday, dinner with Baron d'Holbach; Monday and Wednesday, dinner with M^{me} Geoffrin; Tuesday, dinner with M. Helvétius; Friday, dinner with M^{me} Necker. I do not mention the Sunday breakfasts of the Abbé Morellet; those, I think, came a little later. M^{lle} de Lespinasse, having no means to give dinners and suppers, was punctually at home from five to nine o'clock,

**Correspondance de Gibbon, en Note*. Vol. I, p. 9.

and her circle assembled every day during those hours of the "early evening".

M^{lle} de Lespinasse was not pretty; but through mind, through grace, through the gift of pleasing, Nature had amply compensated her. From the first day she came to Paris, she seemed as much at her ease and as little provincial as if she had lived here all her life. She profited by the education of the excellent society that surrounded her, although she had little need to do so. Her great art in social life, one of the secrets of her success, was to feel the minds of others, to make them shine, and to seem to forget herself. Her conversation was neither above nor below those with whom she talked; she had the sense of measurement, proportion, accuracy. She reflected so well the impressions of others, and received so visibly the effect of their minds, that others loved her for the success they felt they had with her. She raised this method to an art. "Ah! how I wish," she exclaimed one day, "that I knew everybody's weakness."

Translated by *K. P. Wormeley.*

SAINTE-BEUVE.

70. D'Alembert

"His conversation," says Grimm, "offered all that could instruct and divert the mind. He lent himself with as much facility as good-will to whatever subject would please most generally; bringing to it an almost inexhaustible fund of ideas, anecdotes, and curious recollections. There was, I may say, no topic, however dry or frivolous in itself, that he had not the secret of making interesting. He spoke well, related with much precision, and brought out his point with a rapidity which was peculiar to him. All his humorous sayings have a delicate and profound originality."

71. Passage from the Memoirs of Marmontel

Où l'on voit pourquoi Diderot appelait Madame Geoffrin
 "maman Geoffrin"

Among the Academicians whose votes¹ had not been secured² for me, I counted President Hénault and Moncrif. M^{me} Geoffrin spoke to them, and came back to me *in a state of wrath*.³ "Is it possible," said she, "that you [need] spend⁴ your life making enemies! Now, here is⁵ Moncrif perfectly⁶ furious against you, and President Hénault is scarcely⁷ less angry.⁸ — What is the cause of it, Madam? What have I done to them? — What you have done! Your [book on] Poetry;⁹ you are still¹¹ possessed¹⁰ to write books. — What is there in this book which makes them angry?¹² — As for Moncrif, I know what it is, she said, he does not conceal his feelings;¹³ he says openly¹⁵ what he has on his mind.¹⁴ You have quoted a song by¹⁶ him and you have spoilt¹⁷ it. There were¹⁸ five stanzas¹⁹ and you quoted but three. — Alas, Madam, I quoted the best [ones]; I left out²⁰ only the stanzas in which²¹ the same idea [was repeated]. — Indeed!²² that is exactly what²³ he complains of; you ventured²⁴ to correct his book. He will not pardon you during his lifetime or at the time of his death.²⁵ — Then, Madam, let him live⁴ and if he so chooses die⁴ my enemy on account of²⁶ two stanzas [in a]¹⁶ song. I (can) bear²⁷ my misfortune.²⁸ May I ask how I was so unfortunate as to offend the worthy President?²⁹ — He did not tell me, but I do believe that he too is complaining about your book. I will find out."³⁰ She did.³¹ But, when it came to the point of³² telling what she knew,³³ it was [as good as] a scene in a comedy;³⁴ abbé Raynal was present. "Well, Madam, you have seen President Hénault; did he finally tell you what constitutes my offense?³⁵ — Yes, I know what

it is; but he has forgiven you, he is willing³⁶ to forget; don't let us talk about it any more. — May I at least know *what constitutes*³⁷ the involuntary crime he *is willing*³⁸ to forget? — You want to know it? What³⁹ for? What is the use?⁴⁰ You will have his vote,¹ that is enough. — No, it is not enough, and I am not *the kind of man*⁴¹ *who will stand being reproved*⁴² without knowing *what has been the cause of the reproof*.⁴³ Madam, said abbé Raynal, I think Mr. Marmon-
tel is right. — Don't you see, said she, that *his only reason for wishing to know is because he wants*⁴⁴ to make a story out of it⁴⁵ and joke [about it].⁴⁵ — No, Madam, I promise you to keep [it] secret, after I learn what it is. — What it is! Your book again,⁴⁶ and your *foolish way of giving quotations*.⁴⁷ Is not your book here⁴⁸ [somewhere]? — Yes, Madam, here it is. — Let us see the song by¹⁶ the President, the one you quote *in connection with*⁴⁹ drinking songs. Here it is:

Venge-moi d'une ingrate maîtresse, etc. *Who gave you*⁵⁰ this song? — [I have it] from¹⁶ Géliote. — Well!⁵¹ Géliote did not give it to you *correctly*,⁵² since I have³² to tell you. There is an O which you have *left out*.²⁰ — An O, Madam! — Well!⁵³ Yes, an O. Isn't there *a line which reads*:⁵⁴

Que d'attraits? — Yes, Madam.

Que d'attraits! Dieux! qu'elle était belle!

— Exactly,⁵⁵ *there you have the mistake*.⁵⁶ You should have said: O dieux! qu'elle était belle! — Well, Madam, the meaning⁵⁷ is the same. — Yes, Sir, but when you⁵⁸ quote, you *should*³² quote correctly.⁵⁹ *Every man wishes*⁶⁰ to have his work quoted exactly;⁶¹ that is natural. The President did not ask⁶² you to quote his song. — *The quotation was accompanied*⁶³ with praise. — Then, you should not have changed anything. Since he chose to say:⁶⁴ O dieux! he preferred that [wording]. What [harm] had he done to you?

Why should you take away from him his O? Anyhow, he has⁶⁵ assured me that this incident would not keep him from being fair to you, and he will recognize⁶⁶ your talent."

Abbé Raynal *could hardly refrain from laughing*,⁶⁷ and I too, *but we did not laugh*,⁶⁸ for M^{me} Geoffrin was *beginning to feel uncomfortable*,⁶⁹ and when she *knew herself to be in the wrong*⁷⁰ she was not easy to get along with.⁷¹

72. Letter from Lord Chesterfield

M^{me} de Lambert is the one referred to

Greenwich, June 6, 1751.

My dear Friend,

*Solicitous and anxious*² as I have³ ever¹ been to form your heart, your mind, and your manners, and *to bring you as near*⁴ perfection as⁵ the imperfection of our natures *will allow*,⁶ I have exhausted,⁷ in⁸ the course of our correspondence, all that my own mind could suggest, and have borrowed from others whatever I thought could be useful to you; but this has necessarily been interruptedly⁹ and by snatches.¹⁰ *It is now time*,¹¹ and you are *of an*¹² age to review, and to weigh in your [own] mind, all that you have heard, and all that you have read, upon these subjects; *and to form*¹³ your [own] character, your conduct, and your manners, for the rest of your life *allowing for such*¹⁴ improvements¹⁵ *as a*¹⁶ farther knowledge of¹⁷ the world *will naturally give you*.¹⁷ In this view,¹⁸ I would recommend to you to read, with the greatest attention, [such]¹⁹ books as treat particularly of those subjects, reflecting seriously upon them, and then comparing the speculation²⁰ with⁸ the practice. For example, if you read [in] the morning some of La Rochefoucauld's maxims, consider them, examine them well, and

compare them with the real characters you meet [with in] the evening. Read La Bruyère [in] the morning, and see [in] the evening whether his pictures are like. Study the heart and the mind of man, *and begin*²¹ with your own. Meditation and reflection must lay the foundation²² of that knowledge; but experience and practice must, and *alone can*,²⁴ complete it.²³ Books, it is true, *point out*²⁵ the operations²⁶ of the mind, the sentiments of the heart, the influence of the passions — and so far²⁷ *they are of previous use*;²⁸ but without [subsequent] practice, experience, and observation, they are as ineffectual,²⁹ and would even lead³⁰ you into as many errors, [in fact], as a map³¹ [would do], if *you were to take your notions*³² of the towns and provinces *from their*³³ delineations [in it]. A man would *reap very little benefit by*³⁴ his travels, if *he made them only in his closet*³⁵ upon a map of the [whole] world. *Next to*³⁶ the two books that I have already mentioned,³⁷ I do not know [a] better for you³⁸ *to read, and seriously reflect upon*,³⁹ than “Avis d’une mère à un fils”, par la Marquise de Lambert. She was a woman [of a] superior [understanding and] *knowledge of the world*,⁴⁰ *had always kept*⁴¹ the best company, *was solicitous that*⁴² her son should make⁴³ [a] figure and *a fortune*⁴³ in the world, and *knew better than anybody*⁴⁴ how to point out⁴⁵ the means. It is very short, and will *take you much less time*⁴⁶ *to read than you ought to employ in*⁴⁷ reflecting upon it *after you have read it*.⁴⁸ Her son was in⁸ the army; she wished he might³ rise⁴⁹ (there); but she well knew that, in order to rise,⁴³ *he must*⁵⁰ first please. She says to him, therefore,⁵¹ à l’égard de ceux dont vous dépendez, le premier mérite est de plaire. And, *in another place*,⁵² Dans les emplois subalternes vous ne vous soutenez que par les agréments. Les Maîtres sont comme les maîtresses; quelque

service que vous leur ayez rendu, ils cessent de vous aimer quand vous cessez de leur plaire. This, I can assure you, is at least as true in courts as in camps, and *possibly more so*.⁵³ If to your merit and knowledge you add⁵⁴ the art of pleasing, you may very probably come *in time*⁵⁵ to be Secretary of State: but, *take my word for it*,⁵⁶ twice⁵⁷ [your] merit and knowledge, without the art of pleasing, *would, at most, raise you*⁵⁸ to the important post of Resident at Hamburgh or Ratisbon. *I need not tell you*⁵⁹ now, for I often have, and your own discernment *must have told you*,⁶⁰ of *what numberless*⁶¹ little ingredients *that art of pleasing*⁶³ is compounded,⁶² and how *the want of the least of them*⁶⁴ *lowers the whole*,⁶⁵ but the principal ingredient is, undoubtedly, la douceur dans les manières; *nothing will give you this more*⁶⁶ than keeping company (with) your superiors. Madame Lambert tells her son, que vos liaisons soient avec des personnes au-dessus de vous, par là vous vous accoutumez au respect et à la politesse; avec les égaux on se néglige, l'esprit s'assoupit. She advises him, too, to frequent those people, and to see their inside; il est bon d'approcher les hommes, de les voir à découvert, et avec leur mérite de tous les jours. A happy expression! It was for this reason that I have so often advised you to establish *and domesticate yourself*,⁶⁷ wherever *you can*,⁶⁸ in *good houses of people above you*,⁶⁹ that you may see their *everyday*⁷⁰ character, manners, habits, etc.

Courts⁷¹ are the best keys⁷² to characters; there every passion is busy,⁷³ every art exerted,⁷⁴ every character analysed; jealousy, *ever watchful*,⁷⁵ not only discovers, but exposes⁷⁶ the mysteries of the trade,⁷⁷ so that even bystanders⁷⁸ y apprennent à deviner. There, too, the great art of pleasing is *practised*,⁷⁹ taught, and learned, with all its graces and delicacies. It is the first thing needful³ there; it is the

*absolutely necessary*⁸⁰ harbinger of merit and talents, *let them be*⁸¹ *ever so great.*⁸² *There is no advancing a step without it.*⁸³ Let misanthropes and would-be philosophers declaim as much as they please against the vices, the simulation, and dissimulation of Courts; those invectives *are always the result of*⁸⁴ ignorance, ill-humour, or envy. Let them⁸⁵ show me a cottage, *where there are not*⁸⁶ the same vices of which they accuse Courts; with this difference [only], that *in a cottage*⁸⁷ they appear in their *native deformity,*⁸⁸ and that in Courts, manners and *good-breeding*⁸⁹ make them less shocking, and *blunt their edge.*⁹⁰ No, be convinced that the good-breeding, the "tournure", la douceur dans les manières, which alone are to be acquired at Courts, are not the *showish trifles*⁹¹ only which some *people call or think them;*⁹² *they are solid good;*⁹³ *they prevent a great deal of real mischief;*⁹⁴ *they create, adorn, and strengthen friendships; they keep hatred within bounds;*⁹⁵ *they promote*⁹⁶ good-humour and good-will⁹⁷ in families where the want of good-breeding⁹⁸ and gentleness of manners is commonly the *original cause*⁹⁹ of¹⁰⁰ discord.

73. Gibbon to his mother-in-law

Dear Madam,

Paris, February 12, 1763.

You remember our agreement:¹ short and frequent letters. The² first³ part of my treaty you have no doubt⁴ of my observing;⁵ I think⁶ I ought not to leave you any⁷ of the second. *A propos of treaty, our definitive one was signed here yesterday,*⁸ and this morning the Duke of Bridgewater and M. Neville went for London *with the news of it.*⁹ The plenipotentiaries sat up¹⁰ till ten o'clock in¹¹ the morning at the ambassador of Spain's ball, [and then] went to sign this treaty which regulates¹² the fate of Europe.

Paris, in most respects,¹³ has fully *answered my expectations*.¹⁴ I have a number¹⁵ of very good acquaintances which increase every day, for nothing is so easy as the making of them here. Instead of complaining *of the want of them*,¹⁷ I begin already to think¹⁸ of making a choice. Next Sunday, for instance, I have only three invitations to dinner. Either,¹⁹ in the houses where *you are already acquainted*,²⁰ you meet¹⁶ with people who ask you to come and see them, or some²¹ of your friends offer themselves to introduce²² you. When I speak of these connections,²³ *I mean chiefly for dinner*²⁴ and the evening.²⁵ *Suppers*,²⁶ as yet, *I am pretty much a stranger to*,²⁷ and I fancy²⁸ shall continue so;²⁷ for Paris is divided into two Species²⁹ who have *but little communication*³⁰ with each other. The one who *is chiefly connected with*³¹ the men of letters dine³² very much at home,³³ are glad to see their friends, and pass the evenings till about nine in agreeable and rational conversation. The others are the most fashionable,³⁴ sup in numerous parties,³⁵ and always play [or rather game] both before and after supper. You may easily guess which sort suits me best. Indeed, Madam, *we may say what we please of*³⁶ the frivolity of the French, but I do assure you that in a fortnight³⁷ passed at Paris I have heard more conversation worth remembering, and seen more men of letters among the people of fashion,³⁹ than I had done⁴⁰ in two or three winters in London.

Amongst my acquaintance I *cannot help mentioning*⁴¹ Mr. Helvétius, the author of the famous book *de l'Esprit*. I met¹⁶ him *at dinner at*⁴² Madame Geoffrin's, where he took great notice⁴³ of me, made me a visit next⁴⁴ day, and has [ever] since treated me, not⁴⁵ in a polite, but a friendly manner.⁴⁶ Besides⁴⁹ *being a sensible man*,⁴⁷ an agreeable companion,⁴⁸ and *the worthiest creature in the world*,⁵⁰ he has

a very pretty wife, a hundred thousand livres *a year*,⁵¹ and one of the best tables in⁵² Paris. To⁵³ the great civility of this foreigner, who was not obliged⁵⁴ to take the least notice⁵⁵ of me, I must⁵³ just contrast the behaviour of the Duke of B. I could⁵⁶ (not) see him (on account of his gout) till⁵⁶ last⁵⁷ Sunday. I was then introduced²² to him and presented⁵⁸ my letter from the Duke of Richmond. He received me civilly, desired⁵⁹ I would apply⁶⁰ to him whenever⁶¹ I wanted his assistance, and [thus] dismissed⁶² me. *I have not heard of him since*.⁶³ Indeed⁶⁴ I have often blushed for him, for I find⁶⁵ his stateliness⁶⁶ and avarice *make him the joke of Paris*.⁶⁷ Instead of keeping anything of a public table,⁶⁸ he hardly ever asks anybody; while the Spaniard⁶⁹ gives balls every week, the magnificence of which is only exceeded⁷⁰ by their [politeness and] elegance.

GIBBON.

Correspondence, vol. I, p. 28.

74a. Anglomania

Gibbon to his mother-in-law

Paris, March 25, 1763.

... [I have] nothing¹ new to say of his Excellency. I have not seen him since my last letter, and but² once in all. Not a single³ invitation, either general or particular, and tho' I *have made it a rule*⁴ to leave⁵ my name at the door, *at proper intervals*,⁶ I have never been *let in*.⁷ The behaviour is so very singular (especially with such a recommendation as mine) that I am sometimes tempted to think *some ill offices*⁹ must⁸ have been [done me]. Not that¹⁰ I am conscious¹¹ of anything¹² wrong¹³ or even¹² imprudent¹³ in my behaviour. On the contrary, whenever I have heard¹⁴ the

Duke's manner of living [here] blamed¹⁴ [and] laughed¹⁵ at, I have always *thought it right to try*¹⁶ to justify him, even *against*¹⁷ my *own conscience*.¹⁸ Indeed I am sorry, for the honor of my country, to see *how contemptible a figure he makes*¹⁹ amongst our late²⁰ enemies and²¹ constant²² rivals. My only comfort²³ is that the National character is *as much revered*²⁴ as his is despised. What Cromwell wished *is now literally*²⁶ *the case*.²⁵ The⁸ name of Englishman inspires²⁷ as great an idea at Paris as that of Roman could at Carthage, after the defeat of Hannibal.²⁸ Indeed the French *are almost excessive*.²⁹ From³⁰ being very unjustly *esteemed a set*³¹ of pirates and barbarians, we are now, by a more agreeable injustice, looked upon as a nation of Philosophers and Patriots. I wish³² *we would consider this opinion as an encouragement*³³ to deserve a character³⁴ which, I am afraid, we have not yet attained. I could add many things (some curious enough) with regard³⁵ to the reigning politics³⁶ and public affairs; but I have no occasion³⁷ to say why it is³⁸ much better to talk them over in your *dressing room*³⁹ some time hence. Perhaps I have even said too much⁴⁰ already.

GIBBON.

74b. Fragment of a letter from the Marquis d'Argenson *

Why do the books translated from the English *seem so attractive*⁴¹ to us? We do not find in them any method; everything seems to be disconnected,⁴² without preparation⁴³ . . . *The reason is that*⁴⁴ generally English books are free⁴⁵ from the *commonplace remarks*⁴⁶ which are so tiresome, even *in the works*⁴⁷ of our most celebrated writers. Among us, I do not know anyone entirely *free from this failing*,⁴⁸

*Buffon, *Correspondance*, vol. II, p. 36.

except the literary men who have been in England, Voltaire and abbé Le Blanc. Among the English everything *bears the influence*⁴⁹ of freedom of thought⁵⁰ and of a depth of thinking⁵¹ which *can be developed because of*⁵² liberty.

75. Qui était l'abbé Le Blanc?

L'abbé Le Blanc, qui était fort lié avec Buffon, traduisit en français des passages de Hume et publia, en 1743, les lettres qu'il avait écrites à ses amis pendant son séjour en Angleterre, sous le titre de: *Lettres d'un Français sur les Anglais*. De cet abbé, qui était grand parleur, Piron nous a laissé le portrait que voici:

“La Tour va trop loin, ce me semble,
Quand il nous peint l'abbé Le Blanc.
N'est-ce pas assez qu'il ressemble?
Faut-il encore qu'il soit parlant?”

76. Opinion de l'abbé Le Blanc sur Shakespeare

«A l'égard du style, c'est la partie qui distingue le plus Shakespeare des autres poètes de sa nation; c'est celle où il excelle. Il peint tout ce qu'il exprime. Il anime tout ce qu'il dit. Il parle, pour ainsi dire, une langue qui lui est propre et c'est ce qui le rend si difficile à traduire. Il faut pourtant avouer aussi que, si quelquefois ses expressions sont sublimes, souvent il donne dans le gigantesque.»

Cité dans *Shakespeare en France sous l'ancien régime*, p. 177. — Jusserand.

77. Different ways of receiving foreigners of rank

Letter to George Montagu, May, 1763.

Horace Walpole

«On vient de nous donner une très jolie fête au château de Straberri: tout était tapissé de narcisses, de tulipes et de lilas; des cors de chasse, des clarinettes; des petits vers galants faits par des fées, et qui se trouvaient sous la presse; des fruits à la glace, du thé, du café, des biscuits et force hot-rolls. . . .» This is not the beginning of a letter¹ to you,² but of one¹ that *I might suppose*³ sets out⁴ to-night for Paris, [or] rather,⁵ (which) I do not suppose⁶ (will set out thither); for though the narrative is⁷ circumstantially true,⁸ I don't believe the actors were⁷ pleased enough with the scene to give so favourable an account of it.⁹

The French do not come hither to see. A l'Anglaise happened to be the word¹⁰ in fashion, and half a dozen of the most fashionable people have been the dupes of it. I take¹¹ for granted that their next¹² mode will be⁷ à l'Iroquoise, that¹³ they may be under no obligation¹⁴ of realizing their pretensions.¹⁵ Madame de Boufflers, I think,¹⁶ will die [a] martyr to a taste which she fancies¹⁷ she had, and finds¹⁸ she has not. Never¹⁹ having stirred²⁰ ten miles from Paris, and having only rolled²¹ in an easy²² coach from one hotel to another on a gliding²² pavement, she is already worn out with²³ being hurried²⁴ from morning till night from one sight or another.²⁵ She rises every morning so fatigued with the toils²⁶ of the preceding day²⁷ that she has not strength, if she had inclination,²⁸ to observe the least or the finest thing she sees!²⁹ She came hither to-day to a great breakfast I made for³⁰ her, with her eyes a foot deep³¹ in her³² head, her³² hands dangling,³³ and scarce³⁴ able to support her knitting-bag.³⁵

She had been yesterday to see a ship launched, and went from Greenwich by water³⁶ to Ranelagh. Madame Dusson, who is Dutchbuilt,³⁷ and whose muscles are pleasure-proof,³⁸ came with her; there were the Duke and Duchess of Grafton, Lord Hertford, Messieurs de Fleury, D'Eon et Duclos. The latter is author of the *Life of Louis Onze*; dresses like a dissenting³⁹ minister, which I suppose⁴⁰ is the livery of a *bel esprit*, and is much more impetuous than agreeable. We breakfasted in the great parlour, and I had filled the hall and large cloister by turns⁴¹ with French horns and clarinettes. As the French ladies had never seen a printing-house,⁴² I *carried them into*⁴³ mine; they found something ready set, and desiring to see what it was, it proved as follows: (Poems had been printed in their honor.) ... "You will comprehend that the first speaks English, and that the second does not; that the second is handsome, and the first not; and that the second was born in Holland." This little gentillesse pleased and *atoned for*⁴⁴ the popery⁴⁵ of my house, which⁴⁶ was not serious enough for Madame de Boufflers, who is Montmorency, et du sang du premier Chrétien; and too serious for Madame Dusson who is a Dutch Calvinist . . .

The Duc de Nivernois (the French ambassador) called⁴⁸ here the other day *on his way from*⁴⁷ Hampton Court; but, as the most sensible French never have eyes⁴⁹ to see [anything], unless they see⁷ it every day and see it in fashion, I cannot say he flattered⁷ me much, or was much struck⁵⁰ with Strawberry. When I *carried him into*⁴³ the Cabinet, which I *have told you*⁵¹ is *formed upon the idea*⁵² of a Catholic chapel, he *pulled off his hat*,⁵³ but perceiving his error, he said: «Ce n'est pas une chapelle pourtant,» and seemed a little displeased.

Walpole to Mann, April 30. 1763.

78. From Boswell's Life of Johnson

"When Madame de Boufflers was¹ first in England," said Beauclerk, "she was desirous² to see Johnson. I accordingly *went with her to his chambers*³ in⁴ the Temple, where she *was entertained by*⁵ his conversation for some time. [When] our visit [was] over,⁶ *she and I*⁷ left him, and were got⁸ into Inner Temple-lane,⁹ when all at once I heard *a noise like*¹⁰ thunder. This was [occasioned by] Johnson, who, *it seems, upon a little recollection,*¹¹ *had taken it into his head that he ought to have done*¹² the honours of his literary residence to a foreign lady¹³ of quality, and, eager¹⁴ to show¹⁵ [himself a man of] gallantry, *was hurrying down*¹⁶ the staircase in violent agitation. He overtook¹⁷ us before we reached¹⁸ the Temple-gate, and brushing¹⁹ in between me and Madame de Boufflers, seized her hand, and conducted her to her coach. *His dress*²⁰ *was a rusty-brown*²¹ *morning suit*, a pair of old shoes by way²² of slippers, a little shrivelled wig sticking²³ on the top of his head, and the sleeves of his shirt and the knees²⁴ of his breeches hanging loose.²⁵ [A] considerable crowd²⁶ of people gathered round, and were not a little struck by this singular appearance."²⁷

Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. II, p. 252.

79. Rousseau a prey to the delirium of persecution

Rousseau and Hume

Through Hume's intercession,¹ the King, *moreover*, agreed² to grant him a pension on³ the condition that it *should not be made public*.⁴ *To this*⁵ Rousseau at first willingly assented. But *all the while*⁶ the black⁷ [clouds of] suspicion were once more gathering⁸ [in] his mind. *In the St. James's Chronicle*

*was published*⁹ a letter, as malicious as it was witty, addressed to him¹⁰ *in the name of*¹¹ Frederick the Great, but really written¹² by Horace Walpole. The Prussian King *is made*¹³ *to offer him a shelter*¹⁴ and *to*¹⁵ conclude:¹⁵ «Si vous persistez à vous creuser l'esprit pour trouver de nouveaux malheurs, choisissez-les tels que vous voudrez. Je suis roi, je puis vous en procurer au gré de vos souhaits: et ce qui sûrement ne vous arrivera pas vis-à-vis de vos ennemis, je cesserai de vous persécuter quand vous cesserez de mettre votre gloire à l'être.» Rousseau suspected Hume *of having had a hand in its publication*.¹⁶ He became sullen¹⁷ even before he left London for Wooton. In a letter dated April 3, Hume describes a curious scene [with him] which proves, he says, his extreme sensibility and good heart. Rousseau had *charged him with sharing in*¹⁸ *a good-natured contrivance*,²⁰ [by which] Mr. Davenport¹⁹ *hoped to save him part of the expense*²¹ of the²² journey to Derbyshire. Hume *in vain*²³ protested [his ignorance]. "Upon which²⁴ Mr. Rousseau sat [down] in a very sullen humour, and all attempts²⁷ which I could make to revive²⁸ the conversation and turn²⁹ it on other subjects were [in] vain."²⁶ After³⁰ near an hour, he rose up, and walked³¹ a little about the room. Judge of my surprise when, all of a sudden, he sat down upon my knee,³² threw³³ his³³ arms about my³³ neck, kissed me with the greatest³⁴ ardour, and bedewed³⁵ all my³³ face³⁶ with tears! 'Ah! my dear friend,' exclaimed he, 'is it possible you can³⁷ ever forgive my folly? This ill-humour³⁸ is the return³⁹ I make you for all [the instances of] your kindness⁴⁰ towards me. But, notwithstanding⁴¹ all my fault and follies, I have a heart⁴² worthy of your friendship, because it knows both to love and esteem you.' "

Hume to the Countess de Boufflers

London, January 19, 1766.

My companion is very amiable, always polite, gay often, commonly⁴³ sociable. *He does not know himself*⁴⁴ when he thinks he is made for [entire] solitude . . . He has an excellent [warm] heart; and in conversation kindles⁴⁵ often to a degree⁴⁶ [of heat] which *looks like inspiration*.⁴⁷ I love him much and hope that I *have some share in his affections*.⁴⁸

Hume to the Marchioness de Barbantane

February 16, 1766.

M. Rousseau's enemies have sometimes made you doubt of his sincerity, and you have been pleased⁴⁹ to ask my opinion on this head.⁵⁰ After having lived so long with him, and seen him in a variety of lights,⁵¹ I am now better enabled⁵² to judge; and I declare⁵³ to you that I have never known [a] man more amiable and more virtuous [than he appears to me]: he is mild, gentle, modest, affectionate, disinterested, and, above all, endowed with a sensibility of *heart in a supreme degree*.⁵⁴ Were I to seek [for] his faults, I should say that they consisted in a *little hasty impatience*,⁵⁶ which, as I am told, *inclines him sometimes to say*⁵⁷ disobliging things to people that trouble⁵⁸ him; he is also too delicate⁶⁰ *in the commerce of life*;⁵⁹ he is *apt*⁶² *to entertain groundless*⁶¹ *suspensions of*⁶² his best friends; and his lively imagination *working upon them feigns chimeras*,⁶³ and pushes him to [great] extremes. I have seen no instances⁶⁴ of this disposition, but I cannot⁶⁵ otherwise *account for*⁶⁶ the violent animosities which have arisen between him and several men of merit, with whom he was once⁶⁷ intimately acquainted,⁶⁸ and some⁶⁹ who love him much have told me that it is difficult to live much with him and preserve⁷⁰ his friendship;

but for my part,⁷¹ I think⁷² I could pass all my life *in his company*⁷³ without any danger of our quarrelling.

Hume to his brother John Hume

Lisle Street, March 22, 1766.

Rousseau left me four days ago.⁷⁴ . . . Surely he is [one of] the most singular of [all] *human Beings*,⁷⁵ and one of the most unhappy. His extreme Sensibility [of Temper] is his Torment; as he is much more *susceptible of*⁷⁶ Pain than Pleasure. His Aversion to Society is not Affectation⁷⁷ as is commonly believed. When in it,⁷⁸ he is commonly very amiable, but often very unhappy. And tho' he be also unhappy in Solitude, he prefers that Species of suffering to the other. He is⁷⁹ surely a very fine Genius. And of all the Writers that are or ever were in Europe, he is the Man⁸⁰ who has acquired⁸¹ the most enthusiastic and most passionate Admirers. I have seen many extraordinary Scenes of *this Nature*.⁸²

Letters of David Hume, edited with notes by G. Birbeck Hill. — Oxford, p. 77-78.

80a. Selection from Boswell's Life of Johnson

1766-1769

I¹ having mentioned² that I had passed some³ time with Rousseau, in his [wild] retreat,⁴ and⁵ having quoted⁶ some⁷ remark *made by*⁸ Mr. Wilkes, with whom I had *spent many pleasant hours*⁹ in Italy, Johnson said,¹⁰ sarcastically, "It seems¹² to me, sir, you have kept very good company abroad, Rousseau and Wilkes!"¹¹ Thinking it enough¹³ to defend one¹⁴ at a time,¹⁵ I *said nothing*¹⁶ [as to] my gay friend,¹⁷ but answered with a smile, "My dear Sir, you don't call¹⁹

Rousseau bad¹⁸ company. Do you really think²⁰ him a bad man?" — Johnson: "Sir, *if you are talking jestingly of this,*²¹ *I don't talk with you.*²² If you mean²³ to be serious, I think him²⁴ *one of the worst*²⁵ of men; a rascal,²⁶ who ought to be hunted out of society, as he²⁸ has been.²⁹ Three or four nations have expelled³⁰ him, and it is a shame³¹ that he is protected in this country." Boswell: "I don't deny, Sir, but³² [that] his novel may, perhaps, *do harm*;³³ but I cannot think³⁴ his intention was³⁵ bad." — Johnson: "Sir, that will not do.³⁶ We cannot prove any man's intention to be bad. You may *shoot a man through the head*,³⁷ and say you intended to miss³⁸ him; but the judge *will order you to be hanged*.³⁹ An alleged⁴¹ want of intention,⁴² when evil is committed,⁴⁰ will not be allowed⁴⁴ in a court⁴³ [of justice]. Rousseau, Sir, is a very bad man. I *would sooner*⁴⁵ sign a⁴⁶ sentence for [his] *transportation*⁴⁷ than that of *any felon*⁴⁸ who has gone from the Old Bailey *these many years*.⁴⁹ Yes, I should like to have him work in⁵⁰ the plantations." — Boswell: "Sir, do you think⁵¹ him as bad a man as Voltaire?" Johnson: "Why, Sir, *it is difficult to settle the proportion of iniquity between them.*"⁵²

This violence *seemed very strange to me*,⁵³ *who had read*⁵⁴ many of Rousseau's animated⁵⁵ writings with great pleasure, and even edification; had been *much pleased with*⁵⁶ his society, and was just come⁵⁷ from the continent where he was generally admired. Nor can I yet⁵⁸ allow⁵⁹ that he deserves the very severe censure⁶⁰ *which Johnson pronounced upon him*.⁶¹ His absurd⁶² preference of savage to civilized life, and other singularities,⁶³ *are proofs*⁶⁴ rather [of a] *defect in his understanding*⁶⁵ than [of any] depravity⁶⁶ [in his heart]. And notwithstanding⁶⁷ the unfavourable opinion which *many worthy men*⁶⁸ have expressed of his 'Profession de Foi du

Vicaire Savoyard,' I cannot help⁶⁹ admiring it as⁷⁰ the performance⁷¹ of a man full of sincere, reverential⁷³ submission to⁷⁴ Divine mystery, *although beset with perplexing doubts*;⁷² [a] state of mind *to be viewed with pity*⁷⁵ rather than with anger.

On his favourite subject of subordination,⁷⁶ Johnson said, "So far is it from being true⁷⁷ that men are naturally equal, that [no] two people⁷⁸ can⁷⁹ be half an hour together, but⁸⁰ one *shall acquire*⁸¹ *an evident*⁸² *superiority over the other.*"⁸¹

Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. II, p. 6.

80b. On reading⁸³ old books

I fell⁸⁵ early⁸⁴ (upon) French romances and philosophy⁸⁶ and devoured⁸⁷ them tooth-and-nail.⁸⁷ Many⁸⁸ *a dainty re-past have I made of*⁸⁹ the *New Eloïse*; — the description of the kiss, the excursion⁹⁰ on the water, the letter of Saint-Preux recalling their *first loves*,⁹¹ and the account⁹² of Julia's death; these⁹³ I read over and over⁹⁴ again with *unspeakable*⁹⁵ delight [and] wonder.⁹⁵ . . .

Nothing could exceed⁹⁶ the gravity, the solemnity with which I carried home and read the *Dedication to the Social Contract*, with some other pieces⁸⁶ of the same author, which I had picked⁹⁷ up at a stall⁹⁸ in⁹⁹ a coarse¹⁰⁰ leathern [cover]. Of the *Confessions* I have spoken elsewhere,¹⁰¹ and may repeat¹⁰² what I have¹⁰³ said — "Sweet is the dew of their memory and pleasant the balm of their recollection!"¹⁰⁴ Their beauties are not *scattered like stray gifts over the earth*,¹⁰⁵ but sown¹⁰⁶ thick on the page rich and rare. I wish¹⁰⁷ I had never read the *Emilius*, or read it with less implicit faith.¹⁰⁸

Hazlitt's Table Talks, vol. 1, p. 19.

81. Boswell's Life of Johnson

1775-1776

When I met¹ him in London the following year, the account² which he gave² me of his French tour³ was, "Sir, I have seen all the visibilities⁴ of Paris and around it; but to have formed⁵ an acquaintance [with the people there], would have required⁶ more time than I could stay⁷ . . ."

He observed, "The great in France live very magnificently, but the rest very miserably. There is no happy middle state⁸ as in England . . . The French *are an indelicate people*;⁹ they will spit upon any place.¹⁰ At Madame —'s, a literary lady of rank,¹¹ the footman took the sugar in his fingers, and threw¹² it into my coffee. I was going to put it aside,¹³ but hearing it was made on purpose¹⁴ for me, *I e'en tasted*¹⁵ Tom's fingers. The same lady would needs¹⁶ make tea à l'anglaise. The spout¹⁷ of the tea-pot did not pour freely,¹⁸ she bade the footman blow into it. France is worse than Scotland in everything but climate.¹⁹ Nature has done more for the French, but they have done less for themselves than the Scotch have done."

It happened that Foote was at Paris at the same time with Dr. Johnson, and his²⁰ description of my friend while there²¹ was abundantly ludicrous.²² He told me that the French were quite astonished at his figure²³ and manner, and at his dress,²³ which he obstinately²⁴ continued exactly as in London; — his brown clothes, black stockings, and plain shirt.²⁵ He mentioned that an Irish gentleman said to Johnson, "Sir, you have not seen the best French players." Johnson: "Players, Sir! I look²⁶ on them as [no better than] creatures²⁷ set upon tables and joint-stools²⁸ to make faces and produce laughter,²⁹ like dancing dogs."³⁰ "But, Sir, you will allow³¹

that some players are better than others?" Johnson: "Yes, Sir, as some dogs dance better than others."

While Johnson was in France, he *was generally very resolute in*³² speaking Latin. *It was a maxim with him that*³³ a man should not let himself down³⁴ by speaking a language which he speaks imperfectly.³⁵

Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. II, p. 250.

82. Amitié de Buffon pour les Necker

Pour faire face aux dépenses nécessitées par le jardin du Roi, Buffon se voyait souvent obligé de faire des avances qu'on ne lui remboursait qu'à grand peine. M. Necker fit son possible pour lui faciliter les choses.

83. A Madame Necker*

Montbard, le 2 février 1778.

Tous les jours et à presque toutes les heures de ma vie, mon cœur s'élève délicieusement à vous, ma très respectable et tout aimable amie. Je vous vois au milieu du tourbillon d'un monde inquiet, environnée de mouvements orageux, pressée d'importunités ennuyeuses, conserver votre caractère inaltérable de bonté, de dignité, et ne pas perdre ce sublime repos, cette tranquillité si rare qui ne peut appartenir qu'à des âmes fermes et pures, que la bonne conscience et la noble intention rendent invulnérables. Je vous admire tous deux autant que je vous aime; mais je vous dois à tous deux plus que de l'amitié, plus que du respect. Je jouis de ma reconnaissance autant que vous pouvez jouir de vos

*Buffon. *Correspondance*, vol. II, p. 36.

bienfaits. M. Dufresne m'a prévenu de la manière la plus honnête que mon affaire est comme terminée; vous y avez répandu le souffle de vie depuis le premier de l'an jusqu'à la fin de mes jours. Vous animez tout ce qui respire auprès de vous, et dans l'éloignement, vos lettres font mon bonheur. Adieu, mon adorable amie; mille respects à notre grand homme, et mille tendresses à votre charmante enfant.

BUFFON.

84. Madame Necker

Both Saint Lambert and I *belonged to*¹ the group of people who gathered at:³ Baron d'Holbach's, at Helvétius', at Madame Geoffrin's; we also were¹ *regular guests*⁴ at⁵ Madame Necker's, but there I had preceded him, for *I had been almost the first to be received in the house.*⁶

*Strange to say,*⁷ it was at a private ball⁸ that I had become acquainted with M^{me} Necker; she was young then, rather handsome, *with a florid complexion;*⁹ she danced badly, but *put her whole heart into it.*¹⁰ No sooner had she heard my name than she came toward me with *an innocent expression of joy.*¹¹ "When I came to Paris," she said, "one of my (ardent) wishes¹² was to become acquainted with the author of 'Moral Tales'. I did not think *I should be so fortunate as to meet him*¹³ at a¹⁴ ball. I hope this will not be a passing¹⁵ acquaintance." "Necker," she said, turning to her husband, "come and join¹⁶ me in¹⁷ asking M. Marmontel, the author of "Moral Tales" to do us the honour of calling on us." M. Necker *gave me a cordial invitation*¹⁸ and I went. Thomas was the only literary man they had known before me, but soon, in the beautiful mansion¹⁹ where they went

to live,²⁰ M^{me} Necker, following M^{me} Geoffrin's example, *gathered her select group of friends.*²¹

*Being unacquainted with*²² Parisian manners, M^{me} Necker had none of the *attractive ways*²³ of a young French [woman]. In her manners, in her language, she had neither the air nor the tone of a woman brought up in literary and artistic circles and *trained in*²⁴ the school of the world. Without taste in her dress,²⁵ without ease²⁶ in her bearing,²⁷ without charm of manner, there was *both in her mind and in her bearing*²⁸ (something) too prim²⁹ to be graceful.

But she had a charm more worthy of her; it was that of modesty,³⁰ of [genuine] innocence,³¹ and of kindness. A virtuous bringing up, and studies *which she had carried on entirely by herself*³² had given her all that culture can add to an excellent disposition.³³ Her³⁴ sentiment was perfect, but³⁵ her thoughts,³⁶ as she dwelt on them,³⁵ became vague and confused. Her³⁷ ideas, instead of becoming clearer, grew³⁸ more obscure;³⁹ while⁴⁰ exaggerating them, she thought she was giving them breadth;⁴¹ *when trying to give them greater scope,*⁴² she lost herself in abstractions or hyperbole. Certain objects she seemed to see only through a mist which magnified them; on such occasions her style became so inflated⁴³ that, had not its pomposity⁴⁴ been *so thoroughly genuine,*⁴⁵ it would have been ludicrous.

Taste was in her *not so much*⁴⁶ a [matter of] sentiment as the result of opinions she had gathered and *jotted down*⁴⁷ on her tablets. There was no need of asking for her authorities; it was easy to see *on whose opinion and on what standards*⁴⁸ her judgment had been formed. *As far as*⁴⁹ the art of writing [was concerned], *all she cared for was*⁵⁰ elevation, majesty, stateliness.⁵¹ Gradations, shades [of meaning], variety in³ tone and in³ colouring made but little impression

on her. She had heard people praise La Fontaine's naïveté, de Sévigné's naturalness; she spoke [of these qualities]⁴⁰ by *hearsay*,⁵² and *was little impressed by them*.⁵³ The charm⁵⁴ of carelessness, *of a fluent style*,⁵⁵ of abandonment⁵⁶ were unknown to her. Even in conversation, she disliked⁵⁸ a *familiar tone*.⁵⁷ I often *took pleasure in*⁵⁹ trying to *find out how far*⁶⁰ she would carry this fastidiousness⁶¹ [of speech]. One day I quoted to her some familiar expressions, the use of which I thought was permissible to elevated style; for instance: *to make love*, to *begin to see through a thing*,⁶¹ *make up your mind*,⁶³ *the thing to do would be*,⁶⁴ *no, I tell you*,⁶⁵ *let us do something better*⁶⁶ [than that], etc. She rejected them all as *being unsuited*⁶⁷ to elevated style.

"Racine," I said, "was less fastidious⁶⁸ than you [are]. He used them all," and I showed her instances [of this].⁴⁰ But her opinion once formed⁶⁹ was *not to be shaken*,⁷⁰ and the authority of Thomas or Buffon was for her an article of faith. *One might have thought that*⁷¹ she was preserving⁷² justice and *right judgment*⁷³ for the regulation of conduct. [In this field]⁷⁴ everything was precise and *rigidly measured*,⁷⁵ there seemed to be a reason and a method in the very choice of her amusements.

One could see her *busily engaged in*⁷⁶ making⁷⁷ herself agreeable to her company; eager⁷⁸ to receive in a kindly way those she had admitted into it; desirous to say to everyone the thing which would most please him; but all this had been *planned beforehand*,⁷⁹ nothing *flowed easily*,⁸⁰ nothing could *create an*⁸¹ illusion. It was not *for our benefit*,⁸² it was not for herself that she *took so much trouble*;⁸³ it was for her husband. To give us an opportunity to become acquainted with him, to conciliate our good will, *to have his name mentioned*⁸⁴ with praise in society, and thus establish his reputa-

tion, such was her aim in creating her literary circle. With the exception of a few *bright remarks*⁸⁵ which he now and then dropped, *his part was a silent one*;⁸⁶ he entirely left to his wife the care of keeping⁸⁷ the conversation [going]. She used to do her best, but her mind could not adapt itself to *light table-talk*.⁸⁸ Never a [sprightly] sally, never a clever remark, never a *smart hit*⁸⁹ which *would challenge wit*.⁹⁰ [Feeling] worried⁹¹ [and] uncomfortable as soon as she saw conversation flagging,⁹² *she looked askance at us*.⁹³ In her simplicity, sometimes she even went so far as to complain to me. "*It can't be helped*,"⁹⁵ Madame," I said, "one cannot be witty *on demand*,"⁹⁶ and one does not always feel in the mood for wit. Take for instance M. Necker himself, is he entertaining⁹⁷ every day?"

MARMONTEL.

85. Franklin in France*

There were no great newspapers¹ that could daily¹ report² his *sayings and doings*,³ but Franklin, his appearance, his opinions, his *modes of life*,⁵ were known to all Paris.⁴ "Franklin's reputation," says John Adams, "was more universal than that of Leibnitz or Newton, Frederick or Voltaire, and *his character*⁷ more beloved and esteemed than any or all⁸ of them. . . . His name *was familiar to*⁹ government and people,¹⁰ *to kings*,¹¹ courtiers, nobility, clergy, [and] philosophers, *as well as plebeians*,¹² to such a degree¹³ that there was scarcely¹⁴ a peasant or a citizen, a valet-de-chambre, coachman or footman, a lady's chambermaid or a *scullion in a kitchen*,¹⁵ who was not familiar¹⁶ with it, and who¹⁷ did not

* *France in the Revolutionary War*, J. B. Perkins, p. 140. — *Works of John Adams*, p. 660; ditto, iii, 147.

consider him as a friend to human kind. . . . If a collection could¹⁸ be made of all the Gazettes of Europe, for¹⁹ the latter²⁰ half of the eighteenth century, a greater number of panegyrical [paragraphs] upon le grand Franklin would appear,²¹ it is believed,²² than upon any other man that²³ ever lived."

It was as *a man of science*²⁴ and by his discoveries in electricity that Franklin was best²⁵ known in France. Scientific studies²⁶ then *excited widespread interest*, and this *republican sage*²⁷ had made valuable²⁸ researches. The zeal²⁹ for such studies was not confined³⁰ to scholars,²⁴ but extended³¹ through the community.³² Franklin had been elected [a] member of the Academy of Sciences, and he attended³³ its meetings³⁴ with great regularity. . . .

In the year following³⁵ Franklin's arrival at Paris, Voltaire reached³⁶ that city after twenty-eight years of absence. . . . The enthusiastic Parisians could not be content³⁷ until the great American had met³⁸ the great Frenchman. In April, 1778, they were both at the Academy of Sciences, and the audience³⁹ *cried out*⁴⁰ that they should be presented to each other. They rose⁴¹ and bowed, they grasped each other's hands, but *it was not enough*;⁴² the clamor continued until the two philosophers *threw their arms about each other*⁴³ and kissed⁴³ each other's ancient⁴⁴ cheeks. Then the French⁴⁵ [heart] was content:³⁷ Solon and Sophocles had embraced, and *the requirements of the situation were satisfied*.⁴⁶

86. Franklin in France*

Letter to his daughter

A variety² of impressions³ have been made¹ of different sizes;⁴ some⁵ large enough to be set in the lids of snuff-boxes;

*J. B. Perkins, *France in the Revolutionary War*, p. 142.

some⁵ so small as *to be worn in rings*,⁶ and the numbers sold¹ are incredible. These,⁷ with the pictures, busts, and printing, *of which copies upon copies are spread everywhere*,⁸ have made your father's face⁹ as well known as that¹⁰ of the moon. . . .

. . . [There were] many¹¹ Frenchwomen who possessed¹² and liked to exercise an influence in politics, and *there were few of these who*¹³ were [not] ready *to say a good word for*¹⁴ the cause which their dear Dr. Franklin advocated.¹⁵ Madame Helvétius was one of those with whom the doctor *was most intimate*,¹⁶ and if her appearance¹⁷ shocked the New England¹⁸ [mind of] Mrs. Adams, she was not a useless friend¹⁹ to the American minister. Mrs. Adams has recorded²⁰ her impressions, which certainly were less favorable than those of the doctor: —

“Her²¹ hair was frizzled; over it she had²² a small straw hat, with²³ a dirty²⁵ gauze *half-handkerchief round it*,²⁴ and a bit²⁷ of *dirtier*²⁸ gauze *than ever* my maids²⁹ [wore]³⁰ was bowed on behind.²⁶ She had a black gauze scarf³¹ thrown over her shoulders. She ran³² out of the room; when she returned, the doctor entered at³³ one door, she at the other; upon which she *ran forward to him*,³⁴ caught him by the hand, — Hélas! Franklin; *then gave him a double kiss, one upon each cheek*,³⁵ and [another] upon his forehead. . . . *I should have been greatly astonished at this conduct*,³⁶ if the good Doctor had³⁷ not told me that [in] this lady [I should see]³⁸ a genuine Frenchwoman, *wholly free from*³⁹ affectation or stiffness of behavior, and one of the best women of the world. [For this] *I must take the Doctor's word*,⁴⁰ but I should have *set her down for*⁴¹ a very bad one, *although sixty*⁴² years [of age], and [a] widow.”

The well-known⁴³ Comtesse d'Houdetot was one of Frank-

lin's ardent⁴⁴ admirers, *and long accounts⁴⁶ are given⁴⁵* of the great fête which she gave in his honor at her château. When it was known¹ the doctor was approaching, the whole company⁴⁷ set off⁴⁸ on foot and met him half a mile from the château. Then they *walked by his carriage as an escort⁴⁹*, and⁵¹ the countess handed⁵² him from the carriage, when they had arrived.⁵⁰

"The venerable sage," says the French chronicler⁵³ of the fête, "with his gray hair flowing⁵⁴ down upon his shoulders, his staff in his hand, the spectacles of wisdom on his nose, was the perfect picture⁵⁵ of true philosophy and virtue."

87. Playful Jestings

(Badinage)

B. Franklin to M^{me} Helvétius

Chagrined¹ at your² barbarous resolution, pronounced⁴ so *positively³* yesterday evening, to remain single⁵ during⁶ life, in honor of your dear husband, I withdrew to my chamber, fell⁷ upon my bed, believed myself dead, and found myself in the Elysian Fields. I was asked if I desired⁸ to see any persons in particular. "Lead me," said I, "to⁹ the philosophers." "There are two who reside¹⁰ hereabout,¹¹ in this garden. They are very good neighbors, and *much attached to each other¹²*." "Who are they?" "Socrates¹³ and Helvétius." "*I esteem them both prodigiously¹⁴*, but let me see¹⁵ Helvétius first, as I know a little French, but not a word of Greek." — He received me very courteously,¹⁶ having known¹⁸ me, he¹⁷ said, by reputation, *some time¹⁹*. He asked me a thousand things about²⁰ the war, and the present state of religion, liberty, and government, in France. "But you do not inquire,"²¹ said I, "[after] your dear Madame

Helvétius; [and] yet she loves you excessively,²² and *it is not an hour ago*²³ [that] I was with her." "Ah!" said he, "you remind me of my former²⁴ felicity; but one must forget [it], if he would be happy here. For several years I could think only of her. At length I am consoled. I have *taken another wife*²⁵ — *the most like her that I could find*.²⁶ She is not, it is true, [altogether] so handsome; but she has as much good sense, a large share of wit, and *she loves me devotedly*.²⁷ *Her constant study is to*²⁸ please me, and she is gone out this moment to get²⁹ the choicest nectar and ambrosia to regale me with this evening; remain with me, and you will see her." "I perceive,"³⁰ returned I, "that your ancient³¹ companion is more faithful than you; for *she has had many excellent offers*,³² all of which she has refused. I confess³³ to you that I myself was *in love with her to distraction*,³⁴ but she was inexorable towards me, and rejected³⁵ me absolutely for love of you." "I condole with you,"³⁶ said he, "*for your misfortune*,³⁶ for, *in truth*,³⁷ she is a good and beautiful lady,³⁸ and *amiable withal*.³⁹ But the abbé de la R—, and the abbé M—, *are they not at her house sometimes?*"⁴⁰ "[They] certainly [are]; for not one of your friends has she dropped."⁴¹ "If you had *gained over*⁴² the abbé M— *with some good coffee and*⁴³ cream to speak⁴⁴ for you, you would perhaps have succeeded; for he is as subtle a reasoner as St. Thomas; *he puts his arguments in such strong order*⁴⁵ that *they become almost irresistible*.⁴⁶ And if the abbé de la R— had been bribed⁴⁷ (by some fine edition of an old classic) to speak against you, that would have been⁴⁸ still better; as I always observed, when he advised a thing, she had a *strong inclination the other way*."⁴⁹ As he uttered these words, came in the new Madame Helvétius with the nectar; and at once I recognized in her my old American spouse, Mrs. Franklin! I *reclaimed*

her,⁵⁰ but she coldly said, "I was a good wife to you for⁵¹ forty-nine years and four months — almost half a century; be content⁵² with that, I have here formed *a new connection*,⁵³ which shall last forever." Indignant at this refusal of my Eurydice, I forthwith⁵⁴ resolved to quit these ungrateful spirits, and to return *to this good world*,⁵⁵ to see *once more*⁵⁶ the sun and you. Here I am! Let us be revenged!

The Select Works of Benjamin Franklin, by Epes Sargent, p. 90-92.

88. Fragment de lettre de d'Alembert à Frédéric II

Paris, le 1^{er} juillet, 1778.

.... Au commencement de mars, M. de Voltaire, arrivé à Paris trois semaines auparavant, eut un crachement de sang considérable, accident qu'il éprouvait pour la première fois de sa vie. Quelques jours avant sa maladie, il m'avait demandé, dans une conversation de confiance, comment je lui conseillerais de se conduire si, pendant son séjour, il venait à tomber grièvement malade. Ma réponse fut celle que tout homme sage lui aurait faite à ma place: qu'il ferait bien de se conduire en cette circonstance comme tous les philosophes qui l'avaient précédé, entre autres comme Fontenelle et Montesquieu, qui avaient suivi l'usage. Il approuva beaucoup ma réponse: *Je pense de même*, me dit-il, *car il ne faut pas être jeté à la voierie*, comme j'y ai vu jeter la pauvre Lecouvreur. Il avait, je ne sais pourquoi, beaucoup d'aversion pour cette manière d'être enterré. Je n'eus garde de combattre cette aversion, désirant qu'en cas de malheur tout se passât sans trouble et sans scandale. En conséquence, se trouvant plus mal qu'à l'ordinaire un des jours de sa maladie, il prit bravement son parti de faire ce dont

nous étions convenus, et dans une visite que je lui fis le matin, comme il me parlait avec assez d'action, et que je le priais de se taire pour ne pas fatiguer sa poitrine: Il faut bien que je parle bon gré mal gré, me dit-il en riant; est-ce que vous ne vous souvenez pas qu'il faut que je me confesse? Voilà le moment de faire, comme disait Henri IV, le saut périlleux; aussi je viens d'envoyer chercher l'abbé Gaultier, et je l'attends. Cet abbé Gaultier, sire, est un pauvre diable de prêtre, qui de lui-même et par bonté d'âme, était venu se présenter à M. de Voltaire quelques jours avant sa maladie, et lui avait offert, en cas de besoin, ses services ecclésiastiques, que M. de Voltaire avait acceptés, parce que cet homme lui avait paru plus modéré et plus raisonnable que trois ou quatre capelans, qui, sans mission comme l'abbé Gaultier, et sans connaître plus que lui M. de Voltaire, étaient venus chez lui le prêcher en fanatiques, lui annoncer l'enfer et les jugements de Dieu, et que le vieux patriarche, par bonté d'âme, n'avait pas fait jeter par la fenêtre. . . .

Il donna à cet abbé Gaultier, qui la lui demanda, une profession de foi écrite toute entière de sa propre main, et par laquelle il déclare qu'il veut mourir dans la religion catholique où il est né, espérant de la miséricorde divine qu'elle daignera lui pardonner toutes ses fautes; et ajoute que s'il a jamais scandalisé l'Eglise, il en demande pardon à Dieu et à elle. Il avait ajouté ce dernier article à la réquisition du prêtre, et, disait-il, pour avoir la paix. Il donna cette profession de foi à l'abbé Gaultier en présence de sa famille et de ceux de ses amis qui étaient dans sa chambre; deux d'entre eux signèrent comme témoins au bas de cette profession. . . .

. . . L'abbé Mignot, son neveu, alla trouver le curé de Saint-Sulpice, qui lui déclara que si M. de Voltaire ne faisait

pas une réparation publique et solennelle, et dans le plus grand détail, du scandale qu'il avait causé, il ne pouvait en conscience l'enterrer en terre sainte. . . . Il fut embaumé vingt-quatre heures après sa mort, mis dans une voiture *en robe de chambre*, et conduit par l'abbé Mignot et quelques autres parents, à l'abbaye de Scellières, à trente lieues de Paris, dont l'abbé Mignot est titulaire. Il y a été enterré le mardi, 2 juin, en très grande cérémonie, et avec un grand concours de tous les environs.

Le prieur de l'abbaye, bon moine bénédictin, qui ne savait rien de tout ce qui s'était passé à Paris, ne fit aucune difficulté de faire cette cérémonie, sur le vu des pièces que l'abbé Mignot lui présenta. Vingt-quatre heures après, le mercredi 3, le prieur reçut une lettre de l'évêque de Troyes, dans le diocèse duquel l'abbaye de Scellières est située, et qui lui défendait de procéder à l'inhumation si elle n'était pas faite encore. . . . On m'a assuré, ce qui pourrait bien être, que l'archevêque de Paris avait fait consulter un savant canoniste, pour lui demander si Voltaire n'était pas dans le cas de l'exhumation, et que le canoniste avait répondu qu'on s'en gardât bien, et que rien ne serait plus contraire aux règles.

Ne croyez pas au reste, sire, pour l'honneur de la nation, que tous les dévots, et même tous les évêques, approuvent la conduite abominable qu'on a tenue à l'égard de ce grand homme. . . . Toutes les personnes vraiment religieuses, c'est-à-dire, qui ne font point de la dévotion une affaire de parti et un moyen de faire parler d'elles et de jouer un rôle important, blâment unanimement le fanatisme du curé et de l'archevêque.

89. Letter from d'Alembert to Frederick II

I cannot¹ urge³ your Majesty *too strongly*² to see⁴ *that the funeral service*,⁵ which the *Velches* persist⁶ in refusing⁷ to *Voltaire's manes*, be celebrated in the Catholic church of Berlin.⁴ I know that in *every*⁸ country the *clerical set*⁹ of all religions considers¹⁰ him as an atheist, which he was not; but I know too that in every country the clerical set is there¹¹ to obey princes like you, specially when they only ask for a reasonable thing which is in perfect conformity¹² with what the doctors call the church canons.

*All that is needed*¹³ to set their conscience at¹⁴ rest on *this matter*¹⁵ [is] that your Majesty place¹⁶ under their¹⁷ eyes the papers which I *am sending with*¹⁸ this letter. . . . I have¹⁹ to add that M. de Voltaire's nephews, *who have handed them to me*,²⁰ beg your Majesty not to permit that they be made public; *the only thing they wish*²¹ [is] *to enable your Majesty*²² to prove to the German catholics that they can, without *tampering with*²³ their consciences, pray God for him²⁴ who has written so many beautiful books and done so many generous deeds.²⁵ I am waiting, Sire, and they too²⁶ are waiting impatiently [to know] what your Majesty will please²⁷ to order in regard²⁸ to this.

90. From Frederick to d'Alembert

June 22, 1780.

We were thinking¹ you might² arrive *any time*³ when I received your letter; although⁴ I enjoyed⁵ it, it could not replace the joy⁶ of seeing you in person; yet the reasons which kept⁷ you from taking⁸ the trip are so decisive that I am obliged to accept⁹ them.

*What*¹⁰ a fatality [that] gravel should settle¹¹ in the kidneys¹² of a philosopher! Couldn't it just as well *have chosen its abode*¹³ in the body of a Sorbonnist, a fanatic, a Capuchin [monk], or the like?¹⁴ This disease is one of the most painful¹⁵ which may⁴ afflict poor human nature. I advise¹⁷ you to use¹⁸ Mrs. Stefens' remedy; here many people *have been relieved by it*,¹⁹ and, although⁴ the English are⁴ at war with the French, I believe that a Frenchman may *study mathematics*²⁰ with Newton, think with Locke, and *get cured by*²¹ Mrs. Stefens.

Now,²² my dear Anaxagoras, *my fate is settled*,²³ I shall not see you again²⁴ [unless it is]²⁵ *in the valley of Jehoshaphat, if there is one*.²⁶ *As for*²⁷ Voltaire, I may assure you he is no longer in purgatory; after the public service for the rest of his soul celebrated in the Catholic church of Berlin, the French Virgil must²⁸ be now resplendent in²⁹ glory; religious hatred could³⁰ not possibly keep him from walking³¹ in the Elysean fields³² in company with Socrates, Homer, Virgil, resting³³ on³⁴ one side on Bayle's shoulder on³⁴ the other on Montaigne, and glancing³⁵ *in the distance*³⁶ he will see the popes, the cardinals, the persecutors, the fanatics suffering³⁷ in Tartarus the torments of Ixion,³⁸ of Tantalus, of Prometheus, and of all the famous criminals of antiquity.

Had the keys of purgatory been left³⁹ entirely⁴⁰ in the hands of your French bishops, all hope would have been lost for Voltaire; but by means⁴¹ of the latch-key⁴² which the masses for the repose of souls have procured,⁴³ the lock opened⁴⁴ and he came out in spite of Beaumont,³⁸ Pompignan, and the rest.⁴⁵

I was glad⁴⁶ to hear⁴⁷ of the new edition of Voltaire's works which is being prepared;⁴⁸ it would be desirable⁴⁹ if the editors could leave out his too frequent outbreaks⁵⁰ against

people like Nonnotte, Patouillet, and other literary insects whose names do not deserve to appear⁵¹ side by side with so many⁵² passages⁵³ which are *way above comparison*⁵⁴ and, being worthy⁵⁵ to be handed down to posterity, will last as long and perhaps longer than the French monarchy. The writings⁵⁶ of Virgil, Horace, Cicero have outlived⁵⁷ the destruction of the Capitol and of Rome itself; they are living, they are translated in all⁵⁸ languages, and they will remain as long⁵⁹ as there will be in the world men who think, who read, and love to study.

Voltaire's works will have the same fate. Every morning I pray⁶⁰ to him; I say: Divine Voltaire, ora pro nobis! Let⁶¹ Calliope, let Melpomene, let Urania give me light⁶² and inspiration! My saint *is certainly as good as*⁶³ your Saint-Denis.

My saint, instead of disturbing the universe, has *given support to*⁶⁴ downtrodden⁶⁵ innocence, as much as *within him lay*.⁶⁶ More than once did he make both⁶⁷ fanaticism and the judges blush over their iniquities; he would have corrected the world if the world could have⁶⁸ been corrected. This little sample of philosophical liberty *will enable you to see*,⁶⁹ my dear Anaxagoras, *how very little I have improved*⁷⁰ in Sorbonne under the guidance of my doctor; with me he is wasting his trouble and time. . . .

At⁷¹ the present time, the French, the Spaniards, and the English are playing on Mars' tragic and bloody⁷³ stage;⁷² *from my orchestra seat*⁷⁴ I see them *having a trial of skill*;⁷⁵ they joust against each other; the play they are giving⁷⁶ is in the style⁷⁷ of Crébillon; the plot⁷⁸ is so complicated that *one cannot possibly*³⁰ guess what the end⁷⁹ may be. The wind is the knot of all the plays which are given at sea, and I am afraid⁸⁰ a freak⁸¹ of Eolus *might spoil the chances of*⁸²

your worthy country people. Had⁸³ not the empress of Russia long ago made her reign signally great by her glorious triumphs, [the working of] this maritime code would be enough⁸⁴ to make her name immortal. She avenges Neptune by giving back⁸⁵ to him his trident which usurpators had taken away⁸⁶ from him. She might *follow Louis XIV's example*, and have⁸⁷ in her palace a picture representing the legislator of the sea leading the pirates which, thanks to her wisdom, she *succeeded in binding with chains*⁸⁸ to her triumphal⁸⁹ car. But all I have been writing to you, my dear d'Alembert, does not *compare with*⁹⁰ Mrs. Stefens' remedy. Consult your physicians, and if they approve⁹¹ [of] it, make use of it.

After this,⁹³ etc. . . .

P. S. I forgot to answer you about⁹⁴ Voltaire's bust. Let us not insult⁹⁵ his country by giving him a costume⁹⁶ which *would give a wrong impression*⁹⁷ of him; Voltaire thought as⁹⁸ [a] Greek, but he was [a] Frenchman. Do not let us disfigure our contemporaries by giving them the liveries of a nation which is at the present [time] degraded and lowered under the tyranny of the Turks, their conquerors.

91. Les Mémoires et la Correspondance

corroborent l'exactitude des romans réalistes

Avant d'aborder l'étude du réalisme dans le roman, il est bon de relire certains passages des Mémoires et quelques lettres qui jettent sur les idées du temps un jour lumineux. Ainsi, le père de Beaumarchais, qui passait alors pour indulgent, risquerait aujourd'hui d'être considéré comme une sorte d'autocrate; du reste, le père Caron* aimait tendrement ce fils, qu'il comparait au Grandisson de Richardson.

*Caron était le père de Beaumarchais.

Cela encore nous surprend si nous oublions le cas qu'on faisait de Richardson dans la France du XVIII^{me} siècle. Qui songerait aujourd'hui à comparer un homme de ressort, d'entregent et de talent au fade Grandisson? A ce nom incolore on substituerait volontiers celui de Gil Blas. Il n'est pas impossible de faire des rapprochements entre la carrière de cet arriviste heureux et celle de Beaumarchais, homme de talent, qui trouve moyen de sortir de son humble milieu pour faire son chemin à la cour, et qui réussit également à briller dans la littérature et à devenir un des plus grands brasseurs d'affaires de son temps.

Les Mémoires de M^{me} de Staal Delaunay facilitent la compréhension de certains passages de la «Vie de Marianne» qui, sans cela, resteraient pour nous lettre close. Ainsi, nous voyons qu'il suffit de peu de chose pour déclasser une femme de mérite. Cela explique pourquoi la protectrice de Marianne prend tant de précautions pour ne pas heurter de front les idées de sa famille: elle cache soigneusement que Marianne a été, pendant trois jours, apprentie chez une lingère; cela se découvre, et la personne qui avait invité Marianne à passer la journée à la campagne la traite alors avec un tel dédain qu'elle ne veut pas même la souffrir à sa table et la fait servir dans sa chambre. C'est la même raison qui pousse une parente éloignée à réunir un conseil de famille dans le but d'empêcher ce qu'elle considère comme une mésalliance; c'est alors que le ministre, à l'insu de M^{me} de Miran, donne l'ordre de faire transférer Marianne dans un autre couvent; nous voyons ici l'autorité de la famille se substituant à celle des intéressés. Dans «Paméla», la sœur du ravisseur a beau lui faire des remontrances, il n'en a cure; il n'a aucun inconvénient à redouter; en Angleterre, on a «l'habeas corpus».

Marivaux n'exagère pas. Pour comprendre à quel point le préjugé de la naissance était ancré dans les esprits, il faut lire un petit passage de la lettre où M^{me} du Deffand pose à Mlle de Lespinasse ses conditions; passage qui a été en partie omis dans la traduction de Kate Wormeley: «Je n'aurai point l'air, dans aucun temps, de chercher à vous introduire; je prétends vous faire désirer et, si vous me connaissez bien, vous ne devez point avoir d'inquiétude sur la façon dont je traiterai votre amour-propre; mais il faudra vous en rapporter à la connaissance que j'ai du monde. Si l'on croyait d'abord que vous fussiez établie auprès de moi on ne saurait (*quand même je serais une bien plus grande dame*) *de quelle manière on devrait traiter avec vous.*

Marivaux, et dans ses romans et dans ses comédies, s'est toujours attaché à montrer que «le mérite vaut bien la naissance».

92a. Beaumarchais and his father

Old M. Caron¹, not being able to do anything with² his son, decided³ one day to resort to strong measures;⁴ he pretended to turn him out of⁵ the house,⁶ but without throwing him on his own resources;⁷ for young Caron was at once received by [certain] relations⁸ and friends, who were in the secret of the father's plans.⁹ He wrote letters [of the most] supplicatory¹⁰ [kind] to his father, who, however, resisted¹¹ for some time.¹² "I have read and re-read your last letter. M. Cotton has also shown me the one you sent to him. The letters appear reasonable; the sentiments to which you give utterance would meet with my unlimited admiration¹³ if I could only look upon them as durable,¹⁴ for I take it for granted¹⁵ that they are expressed with sincerity.

"Understand, then, *on what conditions you are to*¹⁶ return.¹⁷ I *must have*¹⁸ a full and entire submission to my wishes, and marked respect in¹⁹ words, actions, and behavior. Remember that if you do not *exert yourself as much*²⁰ to please me as you have done²¹ to gain [the good will of] my friends, you will have proved nothing, absolutely nothing, and will only have worked against yourself. I wish not only to be obeyed and respected, but I wish *you to think beforehand of what*²² *will be likely*²³ to please me.

"As regards your mother, who has urged me twenty times *during the last fortnight*²⁴ to take you back, I shall wait²⁵ for a private conversation with you to make you understand [how much] affection and solicitude you owe to her. These, then, [are to be] the conditions of *my receiving you*.²⁶

"1. You shall make nothing, sell nothing, *cause nothing to be made*²⁷ or sold, directly or indirectly, except *on my account*,²⁸ and you must no longer *give way to*²⁹ the temptation of appropriating to yourself anything which belongs to me; you must have nothing, absolutely nothing, but what I give you; you must receive neither watches nor anything else to repair, under *no matter what pretext*,³⁰ for no matter what friend, without *giving me notice of it*,³¹ you must never undertake anything without *giving me due notice*,³² you must not even sell an old key without accounting³³ to me for it.

"2. You must get up in [the] summer at six o'clock, and in [the] winter at seven; you must work until supper time without repugnance; at whatever task I give you to do you must employ the talents which Heaven has bestowed upon you, *entirely with a view to becoming*³⁴ celebrated in your profession. Remember that it will be shameful and dishonorable for you *to occupy a low position in it*,³⁵ and that if you do not *occupy the highest*³⁶ you will deserve no [sort

of] respect; the love of so fine [a] profession ought alone to penetrate your heart and occupy³⁷ your mind.

“3. You *must go to no more supper parties*,³⁸ nor go out at all [in] the evening; *such amusements*³⁹ are dangerous for you; but I consent *to your dining with*⁴⁰ your friends [on] Sundays and holidays, on condition that I always know⁴⁰ where you are going, and that you are⁴⁰ always *at home*⁴¹ before nine. I recommend you, *at the present moment*,⁴² never to ask permission *to break through*⁴³ this article, and I should advise you not *to do so of your own accord*.⁴⁴

“4. You *must give up your unhappy music altogether*,⁴⁵ and, above all, must forsake the company⁴⁶ of young men, for I *will not allow you to associate with one of them*.⁴⁷ These two things have been your ruin. However, *in consideration of*⁴⁸ your weakness, I will allow you a⁴⁹ violin and a⁴⁹ flute, but on the express condition that you only play them on working⁵⁰ days after supper, and never in the daytime, and *that you do so*⁵¹ without disturbing the tranquillity of the neighbors and⁵² my own.

“5. I shall avoid *sending you out*⁵³ as much as possible; but in case I should be obliged to do so by⁵⁴ my business, remember that I shall never accept any insufficient⁵⁵ excuse for your delays;⁵⁶ you know beforehand how much they would annoy me.

“6. I shall allow you your board⁵⁷ and eighteen francs a⁵⁸ month, which will *give you pocket money*,⁵⁹ and enable you, by degrees, to pay your debts. It would not suit your disposition, and it would be unbecoming on my part, *to make you pay for your board*,⁶⁰ and to credit you with the value of your work. If you devote yourself, as you ought to do, to the interests of my business, and if you obtain *any orders*⁶¹ by means of your own talents, I will give you a quar-

ter (share) in the profit⁶² of *whatever work you are instrumental in bringing*,⁶³ you know my *disposition*,⁶⁴ and you must be aware from your own experience that I do not like *to yield to another person*⁶⁵ in generosity; entitle⁶⁶ yourself, then, *to receive*⁴⁰ *more from me*⁶⁷ than I have promised; but remember that henceforth I set no value on words — I reckon⁶⁸ actions alone.

“If my conditions suit you, if you consider yourself capable of executing them in¹⁹ good faith, accept them and sign your acceptance at the foot⁶⁹ of this letter which you are to send back to me.”

Conformably to the paternal commands, young Caron writes on the same [piece of] paper the following declaration.

“Monsieur and honored Father — I sign all your conditions in the *full intention*⁷⁰ of executing them, with the assistance of the Lord; but how⁷¹ sadly all this recalls to me the time when these conditions and laws were far from being necessary to make⁷² me do my duty. It is just that I should suffer⁴⁰ humiliation which I have really deserved, and if this and my good conduct can induce⁶⁶ *you*⁷³ to give me back your kindness and affection, I shall be only too happy. In faith of which,⁷⁴ I sign all that is contained in [the above⁷⁵] letter.”

92b. Beaumarchais at Court

Beaumarchais was invested with the functions⁷⁶ of controller by a royal patent,⁷⁷ dated November 9, 1755.

The reader has not forgotten that, from⁷⁸ his youth, he *had had a passion for*⁷⁹ music; he sang with taste, and *was a good performer on*⁸⁰ the flute and harp. This latter instrument, [which was] then [but] little known in France, was beginning to be much in vogue. Beaumarchais *gave himself*

up to⁸¹ the study of the harp; he even introduced an improvement⁸² in the arrangement of the pedals, as he had previously improved the mechanism of the watch. The⁸³ reputation which he had obtained⁸⁴ as¹⁹ [a] harpist in several drawing-rooms at the court and in the city soon reached⁸⁵ the ears of "Mesdames de France", [the] daughters of Louis XV. These four sisters, whose retired [mode of] life and pious habits formed a happy contrast with the latter years of their father's reign, sought to *relieve*⁸⁶ the monotony of their existence by devoting⁸⁷ themselves to *a variety of*⁸⁸ studies. We read in the Memoirs of Madame Campan that the study of languages, mathematics, and even watchmaking occupied their leisure [hours] *in succession*.⁸⁹ They were especially fond of music: Madame Adélaïde, for instance, played every instrument, from the horn to the Jew's-harp.⁹⁰ The reader will remember that Beaumarchais had already had occasion to make a clock of *a new description*⁹¹ for Madame Victoire. When⁹² the princesses⁹⁵ heard⁹² that the young watchmaker, who had become one of the controllers of the king's household,⁹³ was remarkable⁹⁴ for his talent on the harp, they⁹⁵ desired to hear him. He continued to make⁹⁶ himself both agreeable and useful; they expressed a wish to take lessons from him, and soon he became the organizer of, and principal performer⁹⁷ at,¹⁹ a family concert which the princesses gave every week, and *which was generally honored with the presence*⁹⁸ (of) the king, the dauphin, and the Queen Maria Leczinska, and (to which)⁹⁹ only (a very few)¹⁰⁰ persons were admitted.

LOMÉNIE.*

* *Beaumarchais and his times*, by L. de Loménie, translated by H. S. Edwards, pp. 49, 50, 63, 64.

93. Beaumarchais et les fournitures d'Amérique

"Malgré tous ces contre-temps, les trois premiers navires de Beaumarchais purent enfin partir; ils échappèrent heureusement aux croiseurs anglais et arrivèrent au commencement de la campagne de 1777 dans la rade de Portsmouth." L. de Loménie (*Beaumarchais et son Temps*).

Having made his contract, Beaumarchais undertook its execution¹ with characteristic ardor. He rented² in the Faubourg du Temple an enormous³ house known as the Hôtel de Hollande, in which the Dutch ambassadors had formerly dwelt; *there⁴ a great force of clerks⁵ and employees were installed⁴*, and there the famous author was himself to be found *early and late⁶*, overseeing the operations of the house of Hortalez and Company with an energy that, *to some extent⁷*, *compensated for deficiencies in business⁸* methods and ignorance of [commercial] affairs. Undeterred⁹ by opposition, Beaumarchais proceeded¹⁰ to fulfil *his part of the agreement¹¹* with zeal, *though not always¹²* with discretion. He announced his purpose¹³ to the Secret Committee of Congress in the extraordinary language which the imaginary Hortalez generally used in his business correspondence. . . . "The respectful esteem which I have toward that brave people who so well defend liberty under your guidance, has induced me to form a¹⁴ plan of concurring in the great work by establishing an extensive commercial house solely for the purpose of serving you in Europe and supplying¹⁵ you [with] *necessaries of every kind¹⁶*. . . . Your deputies, gentlemen, can find in me a sure friend, an asylum in my house, money in my coffers, and every means of facilitating their operations. The King of France," he said, "and his ministers must manifest opposition to anything that carried the appear-

ance of violating treaties with foreign powers. But," he added, "I promise you, gentlemen, that my indefatigable zeal shall never be wanting to *clear up*¹⁷ difficulties, soften prohibitions, and facilitate the operations of a commerce which your advantage, more than my own, has made me undertake."

It must (be) *said*¹⁸ that [his] performance¹⁹ *very nearly*²⁰ equalled his promise. He ransacked²¹ the government store-houses²² in order to obtain arms; he purchased clothes and chartered²³ vessels. A fevered activity pervaded²⁴ the Hôtel de Hollande, where tranquil Dutch ambassadors had formerly smoked and dozed.²⁵ Complications *constantly arose*²⁶ *from the desire*²⁷ [of] the French government to avoid any responsibility for what Beaumarchais was doing. There was an abundance of brass cannon in the armories,²⁸ but the arms of France *were stamped on them*,²⁹ if any of these *were captured*³⁰ by the English it would be apparent³¹ that they had been furnished by the French King. *In view of this*,³² Vergennes said the arms must be erased, if it could be done without weakening the cannon too much, and if this was not possible, then new guns must be cast.³³ But Beaumarchais obtained, mostly from the French arsenals, over two hundred cannon, twenty-five thousand guns, two hundred thousand pounds of powder, twenty or thirty brass mortars, and clothing and tents for twenty-five thousand men, and these he loaded on boats which he himself provided.³⁴

J. B. Perkins, *France in the American Revolution*, p. 91.

94. Il suffit d'un rien pour déclasser une femme

M^{lle} Delaunay, à qui on avait promis auprès de M^{lle} de Clermont la position d'institutrice qui convenait à ses goûts de lettrée et de femme du monde sans fortune, se voit, par une malechance inattendue, réduite à accepter la position de femme de chambre auprès de la duchesse du Maine. La voilà déclassée, et ceux qui, jusque-là, l'avaient traitée amicalement lui font froide mine; M^{me} de la Ferté, sa capricieuse protectrice d'antan, qui, dans un moment d'engouement, l'avait portée aux nues, la traite maintenant avec le dernier mépris.

95. Selection from the Memoirs of M^{me} de Staal Delaunay

I went¹ therefore² to Sceaux, at the request³ of the duchess. She lead me as in triumph, and introduced⁴ me to the princess who hardly glanced⁵ at me. She *kept on*⁶ dragging me *to her* [triumphal] *car*⁷ to call on⁸ all the people to whom I was to be introduced. I followed *in the attitude*⁹ of a conquered prisoner.¹⁰ This ceremonial over, she told me I no longer needed her, and that *in the future*¹¹ she did not wish to have any intercourse¹² with me. I *felt worse over*¹³ the loss of her friendship than [over] the results¹⁴ of her resentment.

I spent that first day in a *state of bewilderment*¹⁵ which has not left me any *clear recollection*;¹⁶ I only know that I was strangely surprised on seeing my abiding-place.¹⁷ It was an "entresol" so low and so dark that *when walking I had to bend way down*¹⁸ and *grope my way*.¹⁹

*The lack of air*²¹ made it impossible to breathe,²⁰ the lack of a *fireplace*²² made²⁰ it impossible to get warm. This lodging

seemed to me so unbearable²³ that *I tried to remonstrate; I made some complaint to M. de Malczieux about it.*²⁴ He did not listen to me. *The gracious attentions,*²⁵ the esteem he had shown me, *had been replaced by*²⁶ the scorn that one might have for a *pack of men-servants.*²⁷ I no longer exposed myself *to such treatment.*²⁸ *All the people*²⁹ in the house who *had been attentive*³⁰ to me dropped³¹ me when they saw that *I was prized so low.*³²

I entered *on my duties.*³³ The work which *fell to my share*³⁴ was what is technically³⁶ called³⁵ *the putting together of*³⁷ chemises. *I was very much at a loss.*³⁸ I never had done anything but *fancy work*³⁹ in⁴⁰ the convent, *and just for fun;*⁴¹ I knew⁴² nothing about the other [kind of work]. I spent the day⁴³ *both in*⁴⁴ taking measurements *and in*⁴⁴ carrying out⁴⁵ this great undertaking; and when the duchess du Maine *came to put on*⁴⁶ her chemise, she found on the [upper] arm what should have been at the elbow. She asked who had made this fine [piece of] work; they answered: *I had.*⁴⁷ She said *calmly*⁴⁸ that I did not know [how] to work and that *another [woman] should take this task upon herself.*⁴⁹ I forgot⁵⁰ the ill success of my undertaking *when I considered its outcome.*⁵¹ And yet, it was true that I had *in perfect good faith*⁵² done my best; but even with this willingness⁵³ *I did not fulfill my task well.*⁵⁴ A hundred times *I*⁵⁸ admired the patience with which this princess, though naturally hasty,⁵⁵ bore⁵⁶ my *stupid mistakes.*⁵⁷ The first time I gave her something to drink, I spilled the water on her instead of pouring it into her glass. *In addition to*⁶¹ *deficiency in eyesight*⁵⁹ — [I was] extremely *short-sighted*⁶⁰ — *I was so upset*⁶² whenever I had to come near her, *that I appeared as if I were*⁶³ *entirely deprived of*⁶⁴ understanding and for the simplest things [too]. She asked me one day to bring her some rouge and a little

cup with water [in it] which was on her *dressing table*,⁶⁵ I entered into her room where I remained⁶⁶ *perfectly bewildered, not knowing which way*⁶⁷ to turn. Princess de Guise chanced⁶⁹ to pass *through the room*,⁶⁸ and, surprised to find me in this state of bewilderment,⁷⁰ she said: "*But*"⁷¹ what are you doing?" "Well!"⁷² madam," I said, "some rouge, a cup, a dressing table, I do not see any of these things." Touched by my helplessness,⁷³ she placed in my hands what without her help I would have looked for in vain.

I shall tell you a few of my mistakes,⁷⁴ odder⁷⁵ even than those I have just told, and which seemed *to be bordering on*⁷⁶ imbecility. The duchess du Maine, being seated at her dressing table, asked me for some [face] powder; I took the box by the lid⁷⁷ [and] it fell, *as might be expected*,⁷⁸ and⁷⁹ the powder was scattered⁸⁰ *all over*⁸¹ the table and [all] over⁸¹ the princess, who said to me very gently: "When you get hold of something, *it must be from the bottom*."⁸² I remembered⁸³ this lesson so well, that a few days later when she asked me [for] her purse I took it by the bottom,⁸⁴ and I was greatly⁸⁵ surprised to see *about a hundred*⁸⁶ gold coins which were *in it*⁸⁷ *scattered over*⁸⁸ the floor;⁸⁹ I no longer knew *which way I was to get hold of anything*.⁹⁰

*Another time*⁹² I foolishly dropped⁹¹ a package of gems⁹³ which I had *seized in the middle*.⁹⁴ You may fancy⁹⁵ with what scorn my *skilled and well-trained*⁹⁶ companions looked [at] my blunders.⁹⁷

96. A rushed marriage

Selection from the Memoirs of Mme d'Epinay, the patroness of
J.-J. Rousseau

Yesterday morning, Wednesday, my mother called me to her apartment and said to me: "M. de Rinville, senior^t

has just spoken² to M. de Bellegarde [about] a marriage for Mimi with one of his great grand cousins³ who is *said to be*⁴ a *young man of very good character*.⁵ "But," she added, "your father wishes above all, that *his daughter* [should be] *pleased*⁷ [with] *the young man*,⁶ and we are going to dine to-day at M^{me} de Rinvillé's where [we] *will meet*⁸ M. d'Houdetot, and where, nevertheless, *the subject is not to be broached*.⁹ He did not even wish¹⁰ to speak to his daughter about it, but as she *never notices anyone*¹¹ unless *she is*⁷ *specially concerned about him*,¹² *it might very well happen*,¹³ if she were not warned, that she would not look at him. Therefore I made¹⁴ M. de Bellegarde *tell her something about it*.¹⁵ *Anyhow, nothing has been*¹⁶ settled yet, but *we must have fuller details*,¹⁷ although they told⁷ us favorable things about the Count; *the next thing*¹⁸ *will be to come to an agreement about*¹⁹ the dowry."

To make an incredible story short,²⁰ I will tell you that we all went to dine at M^{me} de Rinvillé's. On entering, we saw *the whole family* [in] *a circle*,²¹ M. and M^{me} d'Houdetot, their son and all possible Rinvillés. Upon²² our arrival the marquise d'Houdetot rose hastily²³ and came forward²⁴ [with]²⁵ open arms to kiss my father-in-law; my mother, Mimi and me, she had never seen. After *all these greetings*,²⁶ the elder Rinvillé took my father-in-law by the hand and *introduced him ceremoniously to*²⁷ M^{me} d'Houdetot, who, *in turn*,²⁸ introduced to him her son and her husband; and we were all introduced and kissed again.²⁹ The marquise is a *middle-sized*³⁰ woman; she seems³¹ to be at least fifty years [old]. *Her skin is*³² still remarkably beautiful, although she is⁷ very thin and very pale. Her eyes are full of fire and wit. All her motions³³ are hasty³⁴ and violent; and in spite of her liveliness one sees that she does not do anything without premeditation and without purpose. Her gestures *play*

*an important part in*³⁵ her conversation, and her eyes *wander around*³⁶ quite as much out of curiosity as out of³⁷ vanity. Her husband *may be*³⁸ twenty years older³⁹ than she [is]. He is an old army officer *who is not unlike*⁴⁰ the king of spades⁴¹ both in figure⁴² and in dress.⁴³ When he is seated, he *likes to rest*⁴⁴ his hands and his head on his cane, *which attitude*⁴⁵ gives him an air of reflexion and meditation which, upon my word, *is very much to his credit*.⁴⁶ He repeats the last words of *whatever his wife has said*,⁴⁷ he sniggers,⁴⁸ showing his teeth which *one would much rather*⁴⁹ he would hide.⁷

M^{me} d'Houdetot *drew my sister to her side*,⁵⁰ questioned her, interrupted her, complimented her, and in less than two minutes was delighted with⁵¹ her grace and her wit. At [the] table, the young people were *placed side by side*.⁵² M. de Rinvillle and the marquise d'Houdetot monopolized⁵³ my father-in-law, and my mother was placed between my sister-in-law, from whom she did not wish *to be separated*,⁵⁴ and the marquise d'Houdetot. At dessert the marriage *was*⁴ *already openly discussed*,⁵⁵ in spite of the silence *we had been asked to preserve*⁵⁶ upon this matter.⁵⁷ After *we had returned to*⁴ the drawing-room and *had taken coffee*,⁵⁹ the servants having withdrawn,⁶⁰ M. de Rinvillle said suddenly turning to my father-in-law: "Well, my friend, we are here among ourselves; between friends as sincere as we [are] *it is not necessary to be mysterious*,"⁶¹ let us discuss this matter openly. *It is a mere question*⁶² of saying yes or no. Does my son suit you? yes or no; and your daughter! yes or no again?⁶³ that is the question. My friends, I consider your children as mine. I say then: your daughter, my dear brother, pleases the marquise very much; I see it," he said, turning towards her. "Our young count is already in love; all your daughter *has to do is to be sure*⁶⁴ that he⁶⁵ is not distasteful to her; let

her speak; speak out, godchild."⁶⁶ My sister blushed. They overwhelmed⁶⁷ her with⁵¹ praise, they⁴ flattered her father; well, they⁴ *did all they could*⁶⁸ to turn our heads and *keep us from having time to think*.⁶⁹

My father-in-law said he was satisfied; but that his desire⁷⁰ was to see his daughter happy. They interrupted him *with praises*⁷¹ of the young count, and M. de Rinville vouched⁷² for his godchild. Then M. de Bellegarde said that he would treat his daughter like his other children; he would give her three hundred thousand francs [as a]⁵¹ dowry and a share *in his inheritance*.⁷³ "Well!" said M. de Rinville rising, "we all agree;⁷⁴ I ask now that we sign the contract to-night; *we will have the bans published*⁷⁵ [on] Sunday, and we will have the wedding⁷⁶ [on] Monday." I pass [on] to the moment when⁷⁷ we were all gathered for the signature of the contract. Nothing was more comical than to see the *surprised expression*⁷⁸ on all the faces of these two families which were almost unknown to each other. They⁴ had [about them] an air⁷⁹ of reserve, mistrust and anxiety which gave, to every one an appearance of stupidity. Everybody signed; then they sat down to the table, and the date of the wedding was set⁸⁰ for the following Monday.

M^{me} Darty came to see me this morning; she told me that the marquise d'Houdetot, as well as her son, is an habitual gambler; that their house is *decidedly bohemian*.⁸¹ Well, she said enough to make me fear my poor Mimi will be⁷ unhappy. I had the courage to say *as much*⁸² to my father-in-law, but I had *to name my informant*.⁸³ "Women's gossip!"⁸⁴ he answered.

97. Nature et art

L'étude des sciences et la critique d'art aboutissent en littérature aux descriptions de la nature en prose poétique, faisant tableau.

«Il faut apprendre à l'œil à regarder la nature et combien ne l'ont jamais vue et ne la verront jamais!»

DIDEROT. *Salon de 1765.*

Apprendre à bien voir, tel fut le but de l'éducation que se donnèrent les Français du XVIII^{me} siècle. Lancés dans cette voie par Buffon et par Diderot, ils apprirent à saisir le point de vue du savant et celui de l'artiste; car ces deux grands écrivains réunissaient en eux des qualités qui trop souvent semblent incompatibles. Chez Buffon, le savant se doublait d'un artiste et sa brillante imagination savait revêtir les théories et les faits scientifiques de la forme la plus belle. Comme il exigeait de ses collaborateurs le travail d'après nature et qu'il recommandait de peindre les objets avec les couleurs de la vie, il donna théoriquement une impulsion à laquelle lui-même, dans la pratique, ne pouvait qu'imparfaitement obéir; myope au point de pouvoir à peine distinguer les objets, il trouvait cependant moyen de saisir le rythme des mouvements et de le rendre avec un rare bonheur. Personne mieux que lui n'a décrit l'écureuil; aucun de ses mouvements ne nous échappe, le son de sa voix nous reste dans l'oreille; mais de quelle couleur est-il?

C'est à Diderot que revient l'honneur d'avoir développé chez ses contemporains le sens de la couleur et celui de la forme. L'étude des sciences avait développé en lui le goût de l'observation exacte; il était né artiste et une circonstance

fortuite l'avait amené à se donner à lui-même, par l'observation et par la réflexion, l'éducation artistique qui devait le mettre à même de parler en connaissance de cause des œuvres d'art qui, en l'espace de dix ans, furent successivement exposées au Salon. Grimm, le correspondant des princes allemands, lui avait demandé de se charger de cette partie de son travail. Diderot, dans la dédicace du Salon de 1765, explique comment il s'y prit pour s'improviser critique d'art. S'adressant à Grimm, il dit : «C'est la tâche que vous m'avez proposée qui a fixé mes yeux sur la toile et qui m'a fait tourner autour du marbre. J'ai donné le temps à l'impression d'arriver et d'entrer. J'ai ouvert mon âme aux effets. Je m'en suis laissé pénétrer. J'ai recueilli la sentence du vieillard et la pensée de l'enfant, le jugement de l'homme de lettres, le mot de l'homme du monde et les propos du peuple; et s'il m'arrive de blesser l'artiste, c'est souvent avec l'arme qu'il a lui-même aiguisée. Je l'ai interrogé et j'ai compris ce que c'était que finesse de dessin et vérité de nature. J'ai conçu la magie de la lumière et des ombres. J'ai connu la couleur; j'ai acquis le sentiment de la chair; seul, j'ai médité ce que j'ai vu et entendu; et ces termes de l'art, unité, variété, contraste, symétrie, ordonnance, composition, caractère, expression, si familiers dans ma bouche, si vagues dans mon esprit, se sont circonscrits et fixés.»

Non seulement il apprit lui-même à se rendre compte de ses impressions, mais il développa les gens du monde à tel point que M^{me} Necker disait, en parlant de la transformation qui s'était produite en elle : «Je* n'avais jamais vu dans les tableaux que des couleurs plates et inanimées; c'est presque un nouveau sens que je lui dois.»

En négligeant l'ordre chronologique, on peut grouper

* *Pages Choisies des grands Ecrivains*, p. xxi. G. Pellissier.

quelques critiques de Diderot de façon à montrer comment il s'y prit pour éclairer le goût du public et remettre dans la bonne voie les artistes qui s'éloignaient du principe unique auquel son esthétique ramenait tout. Pour montrer la vérité de la nature dans toute sa force, il ne suffit pas à l'artiste de copier au hasard : il doit composer son tableau de façon à produire tout l'effet possible.

L'artiste alors le plus en vogue, celui dont l'art brillant incarnait le mieux ce que le goût du XVIII^{me} siècle avait de faux et d'artificiel, était certainement Boucher. Aussi est-ce contre lui que Diderot dirige ses plus sévères attaques ; il le malmène, il le rudoie ; n'importe, « il s'agit de faire sortir de l'ornière où il se complaît un peintre habile » et de montrer au public pourquoi ce peintre est indigne de son admiration. Si Diderot le condamne, c'est parce qu'il s'éloigne de la nature.

La Tour est le peintre ordinaire des membres de la famille royale, de la noblesse, des grands écrivains, des actrices ; mais comme il ne sort pas de ces milieux, il finit par tomber dans la monotonie.

A Michel Van Loo, qui avait fait son portrait, Diderot fait la leçon ; le peintre ne doit pas se laisser fourvoyer par une expression fugitive, mais chercher à démêler et à faire ressortir les traits de caractère significatifs et profonds.

Chez Greuze, il admire le côté littéraire de la composition, le ton moral, le sens caché qu'il faut découvrir et surtout le sentiment que le peintre introduit dans des scènes de la vie rustique idéalisées à la Rousseau ; ainsi, « l'Accordée de Village » est une idylle dont « le sujet est pathétique et l'on se sent gagner d'une émotion douce en le regardant. »

Plus le peintre se rapproche de la nature, plus il montre de sincérité dans sa manière de représenter les personnages.

et les choses, plus Diderot l'admire. Une servante qui revient du marché, des enfants qui récitent le bénédicité, des natures mortes qui donnent à s'y tromper l'illusion de la réalité, tout cela le transporte et il ne marchande pas à Chardin les éloges.

Cependant, il ne suffit pas de dire simplement pourquoi ceci est bien, ou pourquoi cela est mal; le critique d'art a bien une autre mission: il peut montrer à l'artiste comment il aurait pu, en modifiant la composition de son tableau, rendre la scène plus vivante. Sous ce rapport rien n'est plus intéressant à lire que la correction d'un tableau faite par Diderot. S'agit-il d'un sujet mythologique, il cherche à ramener la scène à des proportions familières. C'est dans cet esprit qu'il corrige l'attitude de Psyché venant surprendre l'Amour endormi. Malheureusement, la mythologie ne l'inspire pas toujours aussi bien et il lui arrive parfois de faire fausse route, ou plutôt de s'arrêter à mi-chemin. Ainsi, dans «Le Jugement de Paris», il veut que la scène se passe dans un lieu écarté, une sorte de paradis terrestre où se manifestent de tous côtés les signes d'une vie exubérante et primitive, à l'heure mystérieuse du crépuscule ou au point du jour, que la lumière tamisée par le feuillage éclaire inégalement les trois figures et fasse ressortir la plus belle. Rien de mieux; mais, alors, après avoir insisté pour que le peintre représente les déesses sans leurs attributs, pourquoi laisse-t-il à Minerve . . . son casque? Cette faute de goût surprend chez lui.

Diderot fait souvent des rapprochements entre la peinture et la poésie, et quoique certains sujets puissent être interprétés par l'une ou par l'autre, il montre cependant que le domaine de la poésie est moins limité; le peintre doit se refuser à représenter ce qui choque le goût. «Il* ne faut

* Diderot, *Beaux Arts*, I, p. 176.

pas prendre de la grimace pour de la passion ; c'est une chose à laquelle les peintres et les acteurs sont sujets à se méprendre. Pour en sentir la différence, je les renvoie au Laocoon antique, qui souffre et ne grimace point.» C'est déjà l'idée que Lessing développera plus tard dans son «Laocoon», lorsqu'il montre que la douleur dans son paroxysme ne saurait se représenter artistiquement. Diderot exerça en Allemagne une influence incontestable ; Goethe* s'en rendait bien compte lorsqu'il écrivait à Schiller, au sujet du Salon de 1765 : «C'est un magnifique ouvrage qui parle plus utilement encore au poète qu'au peintre, quoique pour ce dernier il soit un puissant flambeau.» L'idée que la peinture a des limites que la poésie peut franchir avait aussi frappé Buffon ; mais, allant encore plus loin que Diderot, il montra l'avantage que peut avoir sur les vers la prose poétique. Quand il s'agit de noter les nuances délicates, le poète, entravé par la rime, rejette souvent les mots les plus expressifs. Pour saisir l'alliance intime qu'il y eut au XVIII^{me} siècle entre la peinture et la prose poétique, il faut lire dans la «Nouvelle Héloïse», dans les «Confessions» les pages inoubliables où Rousseau, décrivant la nature en peintre, trouve le secret de rendre la prose plus poétique que les vers.

Diderot donne à la critique d'art sa forme littéraire

98. Grimm to his foreign Correspondents

Salon de 1759

November 10, 1759.

After all the eulogies lavished¹ by our journalists without taste or judgment on² the pictures³ exhibited⁴ this year by the Royal Academy of painting and sculpture, you *will be rather glad*⁵ to form a less vague and more correct view⁶ of

*Diderot, *Beaux Arts*, I, p. 459.

this exhibition.⁷ What you are going to read is addressed⁸ to me and will certainly please you better than what I might have written on this subject.

GRIMM.

To my friend M. Grimm

*This is very nearly*⁹ what you have asked me [to prepare]. I wish¹⁰ you may be able to make use¹¹ of it. A great¹² many pictures,³ my friend, a great many poor pictures, I like¹³ to praise. I am happy when I am admiring; I *only wish I could*¹⁴ admire and be happy.

DIDEROT.

Concerning Boucher

Boucher, whose dreams [of] rose and blue *were the delight*¹⁵ of his age, came away from Rome saying: "Raphael is a woman, Michael Angelo is a monster; one¹⁷ is paradise,¹⁷ the other is hell;¹⁷ they are painters of another world; it is a dead language that nobody speaks *in our day*.¹⁸ We others are¹⁹ the painters of our own age;²⁰ we have not common sense,¹⁷ but we are charming." *This account of them was not untrue*.²¹ They filled²² [up] the space²³ between the grandiose²⁴ pomp of Le Brun and the sombre²⁵ pseudo-antique of David, just as²⁶ the incomparable grace and sparkle²⁷ of Voltaire's lighter verse²⁶ filled [up] the space in literature²⁸ between²⁹ Racine and Chénier. They have a³⁰ poetry [of their own]; they are cheerful, sportive,³¹ full of fancy, and, like *everything else of that day*,³² intensely³³ sociable.

Diderot, by John Morley.

99a. Boucher's pastorals and landscapes

What colors! What variety! What abundance of objects and ideas! This man has everything except truth.

There is *not one*¹ part² of his compositions which, *taken singly*,³ would not suit⁴ you; *and even when taken as a whole*⁵ they are attractive.⁶ One wonders:⁷ But where did one ever see shepherds dress⁸ with so much elegance and luxury? What reason⁹ could ever have *brought together*¹⁰ in one place, in *the open country*,¹¹ under the arches of a bridge, far from all habitations, women, men, children, oxen, cows, sheep, dogs, bundles¹² of straw, water, fire, a lantern, hot-water lamps,¹³ jars,¹⁴ caldrons?¹⁵ *What could have brought here*¹⁶ this charming woman, so well dressed,⁸ so neat, so voluptuous, and these children who are playing or sleeping, *do they belong to her*?¹⁷ and this man who is carrying on his head *some live coals*¹⁸ which he might very easily drop,¹⁹ is he her husband? What does he want to do with these *live coals*?²⁰ Where did he get²¹ them? What a clashing²² of incongruous²³ objects! You²⁴ feel the very²⁵ absurdity of it; [but] with all that you²⁴ cannot²⁶ leave the picture. It attracts²⁷ you. You return to it. It is so pleasing a vice, [such an]²⁸ inimitable, such a rare extravagance! There is in it so much imagination, effect, magic and easy grace!²⁹ After you²⁴ have looked [a] long time [at] a landscape like the one we have just *roughly sketched*,³⁰ you²⁴ think³¹ you have seen everything. You²⁴ are mistaken;³² there are still an infinity of *priceless things*.³³ Nobody understands like Boucher the art of lights³⁴ and shadows. He *is the kind of a man who could*³⁵ turn the heads of two kinds of persons: society people³⁶ and artists. His elegance, his *graceful minuteness*,³⁷ his romantic turn,³⁸ his coquetry, his taste, his easy grace,²⁹ his variety, his brilliancy,³⁹ his made-up⁴⁰ complexions, his debauch, must attract coxcombs,⁴¹ affected women,⁴² society people, the mass⁴³ of those who do not understand⁴⁴ at all real taste, truth, correct⁴⁵ ideas and true⁴⁶

art. How *could they help being fascinated*⁴⁷ by the *flashy qualities*⁴⁸ by the ornaments,⁴⁹ the *nude figures*,⁵⁰ the licentiousness,⁵¹ the epigram of Boucher. The artists who see to what a degree⁵² this man has overcome⁵³ the difficulties of painting, and for whom this⁵⁴ merit, which is only⁵⁵ [fully] understood by them, is everything,⁵⁴ *bow down*⁵⁶ before him; he is their god. *People who have a taste for grand things*,⁵⁷ for the severe beauty of the antique, do not appreciate him at all. Moreover,⁵⁸ in painting, this artist is very nearly what Ariosto⁵⁹ is in poetry. He who is delighted⁶⁰ with one of them is not consistent⁶¹ if he *is not carried away*⁶² [by] the other. It seems to me they have the same taste, the same style, the same colors.⁶³ Boucher has a technique⁶⁴ which is so much *his own*⁶⁵ that, *should he be asked*⁶⁷ to paint a face in any kind⁶⁶ of a picture, *his work could be recognized*,⁶⁸ at a glance.⁶⁹

* * *

When he paints children, he groups them well, but *they must remain*⁷⁰ on the clouds *playing sportively*.⁷¹ In this numberless family, you will not find one [child] *who might be set to work*⁷² on tasks⁷³ belonging to real life: study a lesson, read, write, or strip hemp.⁷⁴ They have a romantic,³⁸ unreal⁷⁶ *turn of mind*;⁷⁵ little bastards of Bacchus, of Silenus, they are. *Such children*⁷⁷ *might be used to advantage*⁷⁹ [in] sculpture⁷⁸ on the sides⁸⁰ of an antique vase. They are fat, chubby,⁸¹ plump.⁸² If the artist knows how to handle⁸³ marble well, it²⁴ will be seen. In short,⁸⁴ take all the pictures of this man, and hardly⁸⁵ will you be able to find one to which you might not say, as Fontenelle [said] to the sonata: Sonata, what do you mean to me?⁸⁶ Picture, what do you mean to me? Wasn't there a time, too, when he *was possessed with*

*a mania*⁸⁷ to paint virgins? Well, what were those virgins? Nice looking little *fast women*.⁸⁸ And his angels? Little libertine satyrs. And then, too, in his landscapes *he uses*⁸⁹ grayish tones *so uniformly*⁹⁰ and (to such an extent) that, [if you were] a few feet off,⁹² you might take⁹¹ his paintings for a plot⁹³ of grass or a *square bed*⁹⁴ of parsley. And yet he is not a fool. *He has the appearance of being a good artist*,⁹⁵ just as *some people*²⁴ have the tinsel of wit.⁹⁶

99b. Boucher

I don't know what to say about this man. The *lower standard*⁹⁷ of taste, coloring, composition, characters, expression, drawing; has followed step by⁹⁸ step the depravation of customs. What can⁹⁹ this man *draw on his canvas*?¹⁰⁰ What he has in his imagination; and what can a man have in his imagination when he spends his life with the lowest¹⁰¹ of women! The grace of his shepherdesses is the grace of Favart¹⁰² in "Rose and Colas;" that of his goddesses is imitated from the Deschamps.¹⁰² *I dare say one would never*¹⁰³ find, even in *going over a large tract of land*,¹⁰⁴ a blade¹⁰⁵ of grass like those of his landscapes. And then, too, there is such a confusion of objects heaped one over the other, so *out of place*,¹⁰⁶ so inharmonious,²³ that it is *not so much*¹⁰⁷ the painting of a man *in his senses*¹⁰⁸ as the dream of a madman . . . in the multitude of faces of men and women, which he has painted, I dare¹⁰³ say one would not find four of a type¹⁰⁹ *which could be used*¹¹⁰ in bas-relief, still less in statuary. Too many airs,¹¹¹ coy ways,¹¹² mannerisms,¹¹³ affectations, *to suit*¹¹⁴ great¹¹⁵ art. *Even if*¹¹⁶ he shows¹¹⁷ nude [figures], I see them with their rouge, their patches,¹¹⁸ their ornaments,⁴⁹ and all the baubles¹¹⁹ of dress.

100. La Tour

La Tour is always the same. If his portraits attract¹ less attention now, it is because we² *know what to expect from him*.³

He has painted Prince⁴ Clement of Saxony and Princess Christine of Saxony, the Dauphin and almost all his family. The portrait of the celebrated sculptor Le Moyne is wonderful;⁵ [there is so much] life and truth *in it*.⁶

This La Tour is an odd fellow;⁷ he dabbles⁸ in poetry, morals, theology, metaphysics and politics. He is a sincere and outspoken man. It is a fact that in 1756, while he was painting the king's portrait, His Majesty tried,⁹ during the sittings,¹¹ to carry on¹⁰ with him [a conversation] on his art and¹² La Tour's answer to every one of the king's remarks¹³ was: "You are right, Sire, but we have no navy."¹⁴ This unsuitable¹⁵ freedom *was not taken as an offense*¹⁶ and the portrait was completed.¹⁷ One day he said to the Dauphin who *did not seem to be well posted on*¹⁸ a matter¹⁹ he had recommended to *his attention*:²⁰ "This is how²¹ you are always deceived by rogues, you people!"²² He says²³ he goes to court only in order *to tell them the plain truth*,²⁴ and at Versailles, *they take him for*²⁵ a madman whose comments²⁶ *are not to be taken seriously*,²⁷ and that is why he keeps his freedom of speech.²⁸

I was at Baron d'Holbach's when he² was shown two pastels by Mengs, who, I believe, is at present²⁹ painter to the King of Spain. La Tour looked at them [a] long time. It was before dinner. Dinner is² served, he sits down at the table,³⁰ eats without saying a word; then suddenly he rises, goes to look again at the two pastels, and he never returned.³¹

These two pastels represent Innocence⁴ under the appearance³² of a girl who caresses a lamb, and Pleasure⁴ *as*³² a

young boy *bound by ropes of silk*³³ with a wreath of flowers and a rainbow around his⁴ head.

101. M. Diderot by Michel Van Loo

I love Michel, but I love truth still better. *Pretty good likeness.*¹ To those who do not recognize him, he may say what² the gardner [said] [in a]³ comic opera: "*He does not know me because*⁴ he never saw me without [a] wig." Very lifelike,⁵ [I recognize] his⁶ gentleness and his vivacity; but too young, the head too small, pretty as a woman, ogling,⁷ smiling, mincing,⁸ *pursing his mouth*;⁹ nothing in this picture that reminds you [of] the *sombre coloring*¹⁰ [so characteristic] of Cardinal Choiseul's [portrait]; and besides¹¹ [what] a *display of wealth in his dress*,¹² such a display would be a sufficient reason *to send the unfortunate writer to the poor house*,¹³ if the tax collector¹⁴ *should take it into his head*¹⁵ to tax¹⁶ him *according to the value of*¹⁷ his dressing gown. The inkstand, the books, the accessories as good as they possibly can be when the artist's aim has been brilliancy of coloring and harmony. *Close by*,¹⁹ [he seems to be] *sparkling with wit*,¹⁸ *from a distance*²¹ *he appears strong*,²⁰ [the rendering of the flesh tints being]²³ *pecially good*.²² *Nothing can be said against the*²⁴ beautiful, well-shapen²⁵ hands except that the left [one] has not been drawn. He is facing you, he is bare-headed, [his gray front hair sticking up]²⁶ *is so delicately rendered*²⁷ *as to make him look like*²⁸ an old coquette who is still *trying to be attractive*,²⁹ [he seems to have] the means of a Secretary of State and not³⁰ of a philosopher. *The wrong impression*³¹ *given during the first sitting*³² *was to be the keynote*³³ of the whole work. [The fault lies with that madcap of a]³⁴ Madame Van Loo who *kept coming into the room to chat*

*ter*³⁵ with him, while *the artist*³⁶ was painting his portrait; [that is why he has]³⁷ this expression which was to spoil the whole picture. Had she gone to her piano and preluded or sung,

Non ha ragione, ingrato,
Un core abbandonato,

or some other piece of a similar character,³⁸ the sensitive³⁹ philosopher would have had a very different expression, [and this expression] *would have changed the character of the picture*.⁴⁰ Or better still, [why] was not he left to himself,⁴¹ and *allowed to indulge in*⁴² reverie? Then his mouth would have been slightly open, his absent-minded⁴³ eye *would have gazed into far distance*,⁴⁴ the workings⁴⁵ of his active mind would have been pictured on his face, and Michel would have made a beautiful thing [of it]. But what will my grandchildren say, when they come to compare my poor⁴⁶ works with this smiling, dainty,⁴⁷ effeminate old fop?⁴⁸ I tell you, children, it is not I. In one day I used to have one hundred different expressions; [it] all depended on *the impression which had a hold on me*⁴⁹ at the time. I was serene, sad, dreamy, tender, violent, passionate, or enthusiastic; but I never was as⁵⁰ you see me here.⁵¹ I had a large forehead, very bright eyes, rather large features, my head *had the*⁵² character of an ancient orator, kindness⁵³ which bordered closely⁵⁴ on stupidity (and recalled) *countrified manner*⁵⁵ of olden times. *No good picture of me has ever been made except*⁵⁶ [the one which was painted] by a poor fellow⁵⁷ called Garaud, who [chanced to catch my likeness]⁵⁸ just as *a bright saying*⁶⁰ *may drop from the lips of a fool*.⁵⁹ He who sees my portrait by Garaud sees me. M. Grimm had the picture engraved, but he does not show it. He is still waiting for an inscription which he will not have

until I produce something which will immortalize *my name*.⁶¹ . . . And when is he going to have it? When? perhaps to-morrow; and who knows what I can accomplish? I have a realizing sense⁶² of having used but half my strength. Up to this time⁶³ I *have been idling*.⁶⁴

102. Greuze

Perhaps I am a little tedious,¹ but if you [only] knew *what a good time I have*² while I *am*³ boring⁴ you. You will tell me that *this trait is the chief characteristic of bores*;⁵ they bore [you] without realizing⁶ it. [And yet, in spite of this drawback,]⁷ one hundred [and] ten pictures [have been] described⁸ and thirty-one artists [have been] *commented upon*.⁹

Here is *my favorite artist and yours*,¹⁰ the first one among us to whom it occurred¹¹ to *give a moral tone*¹² to art and to *link together*¹³ events *which could easily be woven into*¹⁴ a novel.

Our artist¹⁵ is rather vain, but he has the vanity of a child, the intoxication of talent. Take away¹⁶ this simplicity which makes him say when he speaks of his own work: "*Do*¹⁷ look [at] this! Here¹⁸ is a beautiful [thing]!" [Take away this simplicity] and you take away¹⁶ from him his spirit,¹⁹ you quench²⁰ his fire, and his genius *will undergo an eclipse*.²¹ I seriously fear that if he ever becomes modest he will have²² good reason to be so.²³ Our qualities, *at least some of them*,²⁴ *are closely connected with*²⁵ our failings. Most honest women are cross;²⁶ great artists *are a little bit off their base*.²⁷ Almost all fast women²⁸ are generous; *devout people*,²⁹ even good³⁰ [people], *are somewhat given to slander*.³¹ It is hard for a *great artist*³² who *realizes that he is successful*³³ not to be a little [bit] despotic. *Whose failings*³⁵ *are to be forgiven*³⁴ *if not those of*³⁶ great men? We have three skilful, productive³⁷

and studious artists; faithful students of nature, they never begin³⁸ [or] finish³⁸ anything without calling³⁹ [in] repeatedly a⁴⁰ model. I am speaking of La Grenée, Greuze, and Vernet. The second has a talent which finds subjects everywhere; among the *crowds of the lower classes*,⁴¹ in the churches, in⁴² the market, in the public garden,⁴³ in the houses, in the streets; constantly⁴⁴ *he keeps noticing*⁴⁵ actions, passions, characters, expressions. He and Chardin⁴⁶ speak very well about their art,—Chardin with sense⁴⁷ and *without getting excited*,⁴⁸ Greuze with warmth and enthusiasm. *In a small circle*,⁴⁹ La Tour⁴⁶ *is also interesting to listen to*.⁵⁰

There are many pictures by Greuze: a few mediocre [ones], several good [ones], a large number of excellent [ones]; let us glance over them.

The girl who is weeping [over] her dead bird. What a pretty elegy! What a charming poem! What a beautiful idyl Gessner would make of it! It is the illustration⁵² of one of this poet's pieces. Charming⁵³ painting! the most pleasing and perhaps the most interesting in⁵ the whole Salon. The poor little one is facing⁵⁴ us, her head is resting⁵⁵ on her left hand; the dead bird *has been placed*⁵⁶ on the upper⁵⁷ edge of the cage, his head⁴⁰ [is] hanging [down], his wings are drooping,⁵⁸ the claws *are turned up*.⁵⁹ What [a] pretty catafalco this⁶⁰ cage [is]! How⁶⁰ graceful⁶² is the garland of verdure which winds⁶¹ around it! The poor little one! oh! how badly she feels!⁶³ How natural is the position in which she is placed! How beautifully her hair is arranged⁶⁴! How expressive⁶⁶ is her face!⁶⁵ It is a deep grief; *she has no thought except for her misfortune*,⁶⁷ *she is entirely wrapped in it*.⁶⁸ Oh! what a beautiful arm. Look [at] these fingers; see *how true*⁶⁹ all the details [are], and these dimples,⁷⁰ and this softness,⁷¹ and *the shade of red with which the pres-*

*sure*⁷² of the head has tinted⁷³ the tip of these delicate fingers, and the charm of it all.⁷⁴ You would like to bend over this hand and kiss it, if you did not have too much respect for this child and for her grief. Everything pleases in her, *even to her dress*.⁷⁵ This neckerchief is thrown *in such a way*!⁷⁶ *It is so supple, so light*!⁷⁷ When you notice⁷⁸ this painting you⁷⁸ say: "Delightful!" Soon you⁷⁸ will catch⁷⁹ yourself conversing with this child and comforting⁸⁰ her. It is so true that this is what I remember telling her *on different occasions*⁸¹ . . . The subject of this little poem is so delicate⁸² that many people *failed to understand it*⁸³; they thought⁸⁴ this girl was only weeping over her canary. Once before, Greuze painted the same subject; he placed in front of a broken mirror⁸⁵ a tall girl, dressed in white satin, who is *lost in profound*⁸⁶ melancholy. Don't you think that *it would be just as senseless*⁸⁷ to think⁸⁸ the tears of the girl of this salon [are due] to the loss of her bird [as to think] that⁸⁹ the melancholy of the girl of the preceding salon [is due] to her broken⁹⁰ mirror? This child weeps [over] something else, *I tell you*.⁹¹ Such a grief at her age! and for a bird! . . . But, *anyhow*,⁹² how old is she? What am I to tell?⁹³ and what a question you ask!⁹⁴ Her head *indicates that she is*⁹⁵ fifteen or sixteen years [old], and her arm and her hand *would indicate*⁹⁵ eighteen or nineteen. This is a failing⁹⁵ which in this composition *is more noticeable*,⁹⁶ because⁹⁷ the head is resting on the hand. Place the hand differently, you will no longer notice that it is too strong and too much characterized. *I tell you what it is*,⁹⁸ my friend, the head has been painted from one model, the hand from another. Besides,⁹⁹ this hand is very natural, very beautiful, beautifully painted¹⁰⁰ and drawn. If in this painting you overlook³⁴ this trifling fault,¹⁰¹ as well as the general

coloring,¹⁰² [which is] too purplish,¹⁰³ it is a beautiful thing. The head is well lighted, the coloring is as pleasing as can be for a blonde, for she is 'a blonde, our little one; possibly you would like the head to stand in stronger relief.¹⁰⁴ The striped¹⁰⁵ handkerchief is broad, light, *wonderfully transparent*,¹⁰⁶ the whole picture is strongly painted¹⁰⁷ without spoiling¹⁰⁸ the delicacy¹⁰⁹ of detail. This painter may have done as well, but he has not done better.

103. Chardin

Here¹ is a painter, here² is a colorist.

There are at the [Picture] Exhibition² several small paintings³ by⁴ Chardin; almost all [of them] represent fruits with the accessories of a meal. It is nature itself; the objects *stand out from*⁵ the canvas and are *so true*⁶ [to life] that one's⁷ eyes might easily be deceived. The one you⁸ see on going upstairs deserves [your] special⁹ attention. The artist has placed on a table an old *China porcelain vase*,¹⁰ two ladies fingers,¹¹ a jar¹² filled with olives, a basket¹³ of fruit, two glasses half filled with wine, a Séville orange, and a meat pie.

In order¹⁴ to look at other artists' pictures, it seems to me I need artificial eyes;¹⁵ in order to see Chardin's I only have to keep those nature gave me and use them well.

If my child were to become [an] artist, this is the picture I would buy. "Copy¹⁶ this," I would say to him, "do copy¹⁶ this over again." But perhaps nature is not harder to copy.

This¹⁷ porcelain vase is¹⁸ [really] porcelain; these¹⁷ olives **are** really separated from your eye by the water in which they are bathed,¹⁹ these¹⁷ ladies fingers¹¹ *you might take*²⁰ (them) and eat (them), this Séville orange you might open (it) and press

(it), you might take this glass of wine and drink it, these fruits and peal them, this meat pie you might *cut (it) with a knife*.²¹ This man understands the harmony of colors and of flitting lights.²² O Chardin! it is not white,²³ red, and black that you are grinding²⁴ on your palette, it is the very substance of things, it is air and light that you take on the tip²⁵ of your paint brush²⁶ *to incorporate it with*²⁷ the canvas.

After²⁸ my child had copied and recopied this painting, I would keep him busy with²⁹ the stripped angel-fish³⁰ by⁴ the same master. The thing³¹ itself is disgusting, but it is the flesh³² of the fish, his skin, his blood—the very sight³³ of the fish³⁴ would not *make a different impression*.³⁵ Mr. Pierre, when you go to the Academy, look carefully³⁶ [at] this picture and learn if you can the art³⁷ of saving³⁸ some subjects from the disgust naturally attached to them.

One⁸ cannot understand³⁹ this magic. There⁴⁰ are layers over layers of color applied one over the other; *the lower shining through the upper ones*.⁴¹ Sometimes,⁴² one might think⁴³ it is a mist which has⁸ been blown over the canvas, and again⁴⁴ it is a light foam⁴⁵ which has been thrown there. Rubens, Berghem, Greuze, Louthembourg would explain to you this technique⁴⁶ much better than I can; all [of them] *will convey the impression*⁴⁷ to your eyes.

Come nearer,⁴⁸ everything⁴⁹ is blurred,⁵⁰ it becomes flatter⁵¹ and disappears; step back⁵² a little, everything is created anew⁵³ and reproduced.

They⁸ told me that Greuze, on going up to the Salon, noticed⁵⁴ *this piece by*⁵⁵ Chardin which I have just described, looked at it, and passed by uttering⁵⁶ a deep sigh. This praise⁵⁷ is better⁵⁸ and shorter than mine.

Who will pay [for] Chardin's pictures when this remarkable man is gone?⁵⁹ You must know, too, that this

artist has good judgment⁶⁰ and speaks *wonderfully well*⁶¹ about⁶² his art.

Well!⁶³ my friend, [you may] spit on Apelles' curtain and on Zeuxis' grapes. You⁸ can easily enough deceive⁶⁴ an impatient artist, and in painting animals are poor judges. Didn't we see the birds of the king's zoölogical garden *break their heads*⁶⁵ against the poorest⁶⁶ [effect] of⁶⁷ perspective? But it is you, it is I whom Chardin will (be able to) deceive whenever⁶⁸ he may wish [to do so].

104a. Vien

Psyche who comes with her lamp to take¹ Cupid² by surprise¹ and see him asleep.

The two faces³ are flesh⁴ [itself], but they have neither the elegance, nor the grace, nor the delicacy which such a subject required.⁵ [To me]⁶ Cupid seems [to be] grimacing.⁷ Psyche is not the trembling⁸ woman who comes on tip-toe;⁹ I do not discover on her face¹⁰ the mixture of fear, surprise, admiration which should be there. It is not sufficient¹¹ to show on¹² Psyche[']s face] the curiosity to see Cupid; I must see¹³ there too the fear of awakening him. Her mouth should be slightly open,¹⁴ as if she were afraid of breathing. It is her lover she sees, and she sees him for the first time, at the risk of losing him. What bliss¹⁵ to see him and to see him so beautiful! Oh, how stupid our artists are, how little they know human nature! Psyche's head should be bending over Cupid, the rest of her figure¹⁶ held¹⁷ backward, as it is when you¹⁸ come¹⁹ toward a place you dread to enter and from which you¹⁸ are ready to make your escape;²⁰ *she should be stepping on the floor with*²¹ one foot while²² the other should *hardly touch*²³ the ground. And [about] the²⁴

lamp, should she *let the light shine*²⁵ into Cupid's eyes? Shouldn't she hold it aside²⁶ and *place her hand in front of it*²⁷ so as to soften²⁸ its brilliancy? And besides,²⁹ in this way³⁰ the painting might be lighted *in a piquant way*.³¹ Those people do not know that the eyelids *are slightly transparent*;³² they have never seen a mother who comes at³³ night to see her child *in his*³⁴ cradle; [she is holding] a lamp in³⁴ her hand and³⁵ is afraid of awakening him.

* * *

Without the charm of landscape, *whatever be the art*³⁶ [with which] the artist *succeeds in drawing*³⁷ the figures, he will succeed but incompletely; without *good rendering of*³⁹ faces³⁸ and characters; without the soul, whatever be the charm of the landscape, his success⁴⁰ will be small; both requirements⁴² should be combined.⁴¹

104b. Pierre

Passage translated by John Morley

The Flight into Egypt is treated in³¹ a fresh⁴³ and piquant manner. But the painter has not known how to make the best⁴⁴ of his idea. The Virgin passes *in the background*⁴⁵ of the picture bearing the infant Jesus in her arms. She is followed by Joseph and the ass carrying⁴⁶ the baggage. In the foreground⁴⁷ are the shepherds prostrating⁴⁸ [themselves], their hands *upturned towards her*,⁴⁹ and wishing⁵⁰ her a happy journey. Ah, [what a]⁵¹ fine painting, if the artist had known [how] to make mountains at the foot of which the Virgin *had passed*;⁵² if he had known [how] to make the mountains *very steep*,⁵³ escarped, majestic; if he had given to the Virgin simplicity,⁵⁴ beauty, grandeur, nobleness, if the road that she follows had lead into the paths of some forest, lonely

and remote;⁵⁵ if he had taken his moment at the rise of day⁵⁶ or at its fall.⁵⁷

105a. John Morley on art criticism

Who that¹ has read [them], can⁵ ever forget the dialogues [that are] set² among³ the landscapes of Vernet in⁴ the Salons of 1767? The critic supposes [himself] unable⁶ to visit the Salon of the year,⁷ and⁸ to be staying⁹ in a gay¹⁰ country house amid¹¹ some¹² fine landscapes on the sea coast. He describes his¹³ walks among¹⁴ these admirable scenes,¹⁵ and the strange and *varying*¹⁶ effects of light and color, and all the movements¹⁷ of the sky and ocean; and *into the descriptions he weaves*¹⁸ a series of dialogues with an abbé, [a] tutor¹⁹ of the children of the house, upon art and landscape and the processes²⁰ of the universe. Nothing²¹ can be more excellent and²² lifelike; it is not until²³ the end that he lets the²⁵ secret slip²⁴ *that the whole fabric*²⁶ has been a flight²⁷ of fancy, inspired by *no*²⁸ real landscape, but by the sea-pieces²⁹ sent to the exhibition by Vernet.

John Morley. *Diderot*, vol. II, p. 72.

105b. Dialogue

On my right in the *far distance*³⁰ a mountain lifted its summit into³¹ the clouds. Just then, chance had brought³² there a traveler *who was standing still*.³³ The foot of this mountain *was hidden from us*³⁴ by a mass of rock standing in *between*.³⁵ The foot of this rock, [as it] spread³⁶ out [first] *dropping down then rising up again*,³⁷ divided in two the depth of the scene. *On the extreme right*,³⁸ on the projecting³⁹ rock, I noticed two figures so *effective*⁴⁰ that art could not have *placed* [them] *better*.⁴⁰ They were fishermen; one was

sitting on the rock [with] his legs hanging down, holding his line which he had cast⁴¹ into the waters which in this place washed [against] *the rock*,⁴² the other, his net⁴³ over his shoulders, was bending over the first and talking with him. On the kind of *stony road*⁴⁴ which the base of the rock formed as it spread,⁴⁵ in a place where the road was dropping down⁴⁶ into the background, a covered wagon⁴⁷ driven by a peasant was heading⁴⁸ toward a village placed below the road. This again was an incident which art would have suggested; my glance,⁴⁹ *passing over this narrow strip*⁵⁰ of rock [after] meeting⁵¹ the top of the village houses, *wandered and lost itself*⁵² in the (open) country which merged⁵³ into the sky.

"Which one of your artists," said my guide, "*would have conceived the idea of breaking*⁵⁴ the uniformity⁵⁵ of this rocky road by a clump of trees?"

— Vernet, possibly.

All right,⁵⁶ but would your Vernet have conceived⁵⁸ the elegance and the charm of *it*⁵⁷ [all]? Would he have been able⁵⁹ to render the warm and piquant effect of the light which dances⁶⁰ along the trunk and branches? — Why not?⁶¹

[Could he have] rendered⁶² the wide⁶³ expanse that your glance discovers beyond it?⁶⁴ — He has done it occasionally. You don't know this artist; you don't know how familiar the phenomena of nature are to him.

I was answering absentmindedly; for my attention was engrossed⁶⁵ by a mass of rocks overgrown⁶⁶ by wild shrubs which nature had placed at the other end of the rocky ledge.⁶⁷ This mass was also hidden⁶⁸ by a rock *which, standing in front of it*⁶⁹ and being separated⁷⁰ from the first [by a cleft], formed a canal *through which*⁷¹ the waters⁷³ rushed down like a⁷² torrent, forming finally a waterfall, which was *splashing foam*⁷⁴ on the detached stones. "Well," said I to my guide,

“go to the Exhibit and you will see that a powerful imagination, helped by conscientious study of nature, has *enabled one of our artists to create*⁷⁵ exactly⁷⁶ these rocks, this waterfall, this *little bit*⁷⁷ of landscape.”

— And perhaps with this *large block of unhewn granite*,⁷⁸ and this fisherman sitting⁷⁹ [down], who is taking up his net and gathering his *fishing tackle*⁸⁰ scattered around him, and his wife standing, and this woman *with her back turned*.⁸¹

— You don't know, abbé, what a bad joker you are.

The space comprised between the waterfall rocks,⁸² the rocky road, and the mountains on⁸³ the left formed a lake on the shores of which we were walking; from there we were admiring this wonderful scene; however a cloud had risen in the region⁸⁴ of the sky that we could see between the clump of trees on the rocky ledge and the rocks with⁸² the fishermen—a light cloud which was sailing⁸⁵ [through the sky] at the will⁸⁶ [of the wind] . . . Then turning towards the abbé: “In good faith,” said I, “do you think that an able⁸⁷ artist could have dispensed⁷⁰ with⁸³ placing this cloud precisely where it is? Don't you see that it defines⁸⁸ to the eye the space both on this side⁸⁹ and beyond, that it places⁹⁰ the sky farther away, and *brings all the objects forward*?⁹¹ Vernet would have realized⁹² all that. The other artists, by overclouding⁹³ their skies, intend⁹⁴ only to break the monotony. Vernet wishes his skies to have the life⁹⁵ and the magic of that which we see.”

— You may repeat⁹⁶ Vernet, Vernet [as much as you please]; I have no intention of leaving nature to run after its image. Man may⁹⁷ be ever so wonderful; he is not God.

— *I agree with you*,⁹⁸ but if you had had any intercourse⁹⁹ [with] the artist, perhaps he might have taught you to see in nature what you do not see in it. How many things with

which you might find fault!¹⁰⁰ How many art leaves out because they spoil¹⁰¹ the [general] effect and interfere¹⁰¹ with it; how many he would bring together which *would greatly add*¹⁰² [to] our delight!¹⁰³

— Why! do you mean seriously that Vernet might have done better than copy this scene exactly?

— I believe it.

— Then tell me how he would go to work¹⁰⁴ to beautify this scene.

— I *cannot possibly tell*,¹⁰⁵ and if I knew (it) I would be a greater poet and a greater painter than he is; but had Vernet taught you to see nature better, nature *in her turn*¹⁰⁶ would have taught you how to appreciate Vernet.

PART II

106. Influence orientale

Au XVIII^{me} siècle, le goût de l'Orient se répandit en France par la lecture des relations de voyages publiées dans la seconde moitié du XVII^{me} siècle. Ceux qui, à cette époque, visitaient l'Orient étaient le plus souvent des marchands de pierres précieuses qui voyageaient dans l'intérêt de leur commerce. Les ouvrages de Chardin et de Tavernier furent énormément lus. Ces récits, intéressants surtout par le fond, n'ont, sous le rapport de la forme artistique, qu'une valeur négligeable. De tour d'esprit, ces deux voyageurs ne se ressemblaient guère, Chardin, surtout critique et philosophe, cherchait à rectifier, par des observations faites sur place, les erreurs de la tradition; volontiers il avançait des théories et Montesquieu lui en a emprunté deux: celle de l'influence du climat et celle du despotisme. Ce fut, dit M. Sorel, de Chardin «qu'il s'inspira dans l'espèce de roman qu'il mêla aux *Lettres persanes* et dans la composition du décor où il plaça ses personnages.»

Tavernier, lui, était un brave homme, sans malice, qui racontait les choses telles qu'il les voyait, et il faut bien avouer que, parfois, il regardait un peu en badaud; témoin le récit qu'il fait d'un fameux tour de passe-passe qu'il vit aux Indes. En lisant ce récit, on ne peut s'empêcher de penser que le magicien eut beau jeu à faire couler, devant des yeux aussi peu prévenus, quelques gouttes de son sang dont il teignait ensuite le bâton qui, à vue d'œil, se transformait en arbuste fleuri.

Son livre qui, sous certains rapports, aurait pu servir de guide, contenait quantité de renseignements pratiques; il faisait aussi connaître les coutumes du pays, qu'il décrivait minutieusement, les objets caractéristiques, qu'il nommait par leur nom hindou et, comme son métier avait sans doute développé en lui le sens de la précision, il tâchait de donner à ses lecteurs des notions exactes. Il avait volontiers recours à des comparaisons familières; ainsi: le Gange pouvait se comparer à la Seine, la silhouette d'un temple rappelait le Val de Grâce; puis, un peu d'imprévu, une note vive: le pagné de quelques Hindous qui passent est de couleur orange. Pour les lecteurs de ce temps-là, qui n'étaient pas blasés sur ce genre d'impressions, ce livre, avec sa couleur locale, avait déjà le charme de l'exotisme.

(For oral translation)

107. Tavernier's 'Travels in India'

Edited by T. Ball. From Surat to Baroche, 22 coss.

All the country between these two towns is one of corn, rice, millet, and sugar canes. Before entering Broach, you cross, by ferry, a river which runs to Cambay and discharges itself afterwards into the gulf of the same name.

Broach is a large town, containing an ancient fortress which they have neglected to maintain; but it has been widely renowned from all time on account of its river, which possesses a peculiar property for bleaching calicoes, and they bring them for this reason from all quarters of the empire of the Great Mogul, where there is not the same abundance of water. In this place there is made a quantity of baftas or pieces of long and narrow calico; these are very

beautiful and closely woven cloths, and the price of them ranges from four to one hundred rupees. Custom dues have to be paid at Broach on all goods, whether imported or exported. The English have a very fine dwelling there; and I remember that, on arrival one day when returning from Agra to Surat with the President of the English, some jugglers immediately came to ask him if he desired that they should show him some examples of their art; these he was curious to see. The first thing they did was to kindle a large fire and heat iron chains to redness; these they wound round their bodies, making believe that they experienced some pain, but not really receiving any injury. Next, having taken a small piece of stick, and having planted it in the ground, they asked one of the company what fruit he wished to have. He replied that he desired mangoes, and then one of the conjurers, covering himself with a sheet, stooped to the ground five or six times. I had the curiosity to ascend to a room in order to see from above, through an opening of the sheet, what this man did, and I saw that he cut himself under his armpits with a razor, and anointed the piece of wood with his blood. At each time that he raised himself, the stick increased under the eye, and at the third time it put forth branches and buds. At the fourth time the tree was covered with leaves, and at the fifth we saw the flowers themselves. The President of the English had his clergyman with him, having taken him to Ahmadábád to baptize a child of the Dutch Commander, of whom he had been asked to be the godfather, for it should be remarked that the Dutch have no clergymen save in those places where they have both merchants and soldiers together. The English clergyman had at first protested that he was unable to consent that Christians should be present at such

spectacles, and when he beheld that from a piece of dry wood these people, in less than half an hour, had caused a tree of four or five feet in height to appear, with leaves and flowers, as in springtime, he made it his duty to break it, and proclaimed loudly that he would never administer the communion to anyone of those who remained longer to witness such things. This compelled the President to dismiss the jugglers, who travel from place to place with their wives and children, like those whom we in Europe commonly call Egyptians or Bohemians, and having given them the equivalent of ten or twelve écus, they withdrew very well satisfied.

(For oral translation)

108. The Travels of Sir John Chardin in Persia

Through the Black Sea and the Country of Colchis

Twelve leagues from Erivan to the East is to be seen the famous mountain where almost all men agree that the ark of Noah rested, though nobody can bring any solid proof to make out what they affirm.

When the air is serene, this mountain is not to be seen at more than the distance of two leagues, as high and as great as it is; therefore I am apt to believe I have seen far higher; and, if I am not deceived, that part of Caucasus which I cross'd over, as I travelled from the Black Sea to Akalzike, is higher than this mountain. . . .

The Armenians have a tradition that the ark is still upon the point, or highest top. They add, moreover, that never could anybody ascend to the place where it rested; and this they firmly believe upon the faith of a miracle which, they say, happen'd to a certain monk of Echs-Miazin, whose name was James, afterwards Bishop of Nisibis. They re-

port that this monk, possess'd with the common opinion that this was the mountain where the ark rested after the deluge, resolved to ascend to the top, or die in the attempt, that he got up half way, but could never go any farther, for that after he had clamber'd all the day long, he was in his sleep miraculously carry'd back to the place from whence he set forward in the morning. This continu'd a long time; but that at length God, giving ear to the monk's prayers, was willing to satisfy his desires in some measure; to which purpose he sent an angel to him with a piece of the ark, with orders to bid him not toil himself any more in vain, for that he had debarr'd from mortals access to the top of that mountain. And this is the tale which they tell; upon which I shall observe two things. First, that it has no coherence with the relation of the ancient authors, as Josephus, Berosus, or Nicholas of Damascus, who assure us that the remainders of the ark were to be seen, and that the people took the pitch with which it was besmeared as an antidote against several distempers. The second, that whereas it is tak'n for a miracle that nobody can get up to the top, I should rather take it for a greater miracle that any man should climb up so high. For the mountain is altogether uninhabited and, from halfway to the top of all, perpetually cover'd with snow that never melts, so that all the seasons of the year it appears like a prodigious peak of nothing but snow. What I have reported concerning this mountain will doubtless cause no small wonder in those who have read the Travels of Father Philip, a Barefoot Carmelite, that he should undertake to say that the Terrestrial Paradise lies there "in some plain which God preserves from heat and cold," for these are the words of his translator. The thought itself seems to me to be very pleasant; and I should have thought he

had spoken it jocularly, did he not relate with an extraordinary seriousness several things in the same book which are altogether as improbable.

109. The First Translator of the 'Mille et une Nuits'

Antoine Galland, professeur au collège Mazarin, attaché théologique de l'ambassadeur de France à Constantinople

*It was on*¹ a bright summer morning, August 21st, 1670. The Princess, one of the prettiest frigates of the Royal navy, *was leaving her moorings in*² the harbor of Marseilles; she had *unfurled her great flag*³ in honor of the ambassador who was accompanied by a numerous and brilliant retinue.⁴ It was *in the quality of*⁵ [a] theological attaché that Antoine Galland *belonged to*⁶ the embassy of Marquis de Nointel. [The idea of such a] *post*⁷ *originated in the brains of*⁸ the Port-Royal gentlemen; le grand Arnauld and M. Nicole *in particular*,⁹ *who were on intimate terms*¹⁰ with M. de Pomponne, then Secretary of State for¹¹ foreign affairs. These gentlemen, [having] *entered*¹² into a lively controversy with a protestant pastor, M. Claude, on the mystery of the Eucharist, [they] *wished to know more about*¹³ the doctrines of the religious orders in the East *on*¹⁴ the dogma of the real presence. *As he was a scholar*¹⁵ sufficiently versed in the knowledge of Hebrew, of modern Greek, and of ancient Asiatic languages such as Sanscrit and Pahlavi,¹⁶ Antoine Galland was specially qualified *to carry out successfully*¹⁷ the delicate *mission*¹⁸ *with which his ecclesiastical professors had entrusted him*.¹⁹ As modest as [he was] learned, *his dream was*²⁰ to devote²¹ his life *to the cataloguing*²² of the Oriental manuscripts of the Sorbonne. *His interest being easily awakened*,²³ *he was eager*²⁴ to see *something new*.²⁵ [A] passionate and

enthusiastic booklover,²⁶ he bought ancient books [in] Arabic²⁷ and enjoyed²⁸ the charm of the fantastic tales in which the narrative genius of the East displays²⁹ its delightful fantasy. And so it was that the theological attaché of the French embassy [happened] to become³⁰ the translator of the 'Thousand and one Nights.'

His position with³¹ the ambassador, his taste for studious leisure³² and for watchful idleness,³³ *his easily awakened and unflagging interest*,³⁴ his perfect command³⁵ of the different languages of the country, his innumerable connections³⁶ in all the social classes of the Ottoman empire *made it possible for him*³⁷ to see a Turkey [which we do not dream of³⁸] — the real Turkey, which conceals³⁹ itself from the eyes of the hurried tourist or the over-busy⁴⁰ diplomat. Every night, after having watched⁴¹ the Turkish ceremonies at the Old Serail, or the performance⁴² of the howling⁴³ or dancing⁴³ dervishes, or seen the exchange of presents⁴⁴ and of politenesses in the embassies, *he wrote down everything*⁴⁵ he had seen or heard. *So that*⁴⁶ his diary is a *summing up*⁴⁷ of direct observation which enables³⁷ us to see again, *with the mind's eyes*,⁴⁸ the capital of the Ottoman empire, very nearly as⁴⁹ it was *in the remote ages*⁵⁰ when,⁵¹ *at a mere sign of the sultan*,⁵² the ambassadors of the great powers⁵⁴ *could be imprisoned*⁵³ at⁵⁵ the Seven Towers.

The diversions⁵⁶ *in which the*⁵⁷ future author of the "Thousand and one Nights" [used to indulge] were mostly literary. . . . But the triumph of Antoine Galland was the presentation of "Le Cid," given⁵⁸ by the ambassador [for the benefit of⁵⁹] a very large gathering⁶⁰ of Franks and Greeks and women both from Pera and from Galata. The young theological attaché *had been entrusted*⁶¹ [with] the part⁶² of Elvire, Chimène's attendant. And the charming daughters of M.

Roboly, [a] wealthy merchant,⁶³ had ransacked⁶⁴ their wardrobes to provide⁶⁵ for him a costume [which would be] sufficiently picturesque. He wore a "light brown caftan"⁶⁶ ornamented with filigree⁶⁷ buttons, a very rich belt made of rubies and diamonds . . . a skirt of gold and silver brocade *on a crimson background*⁶⁸. . . . His *heelless slippers*⁶⁹ were white, his turban, so heavy "that he had to make an effort in order not to *let his head droop*,"⁷⁰ [was⁷¹] ornamented with sparkling aigrettes; muslin and gauze *were wound up around it*.⁷¹ *In his ears they*⁶¹ *put*⁷² two rather large emerald drops⁷³ with two strings⁷⁴ of pearls tied *at both ends*.⁷⁵ Thus arrayed *in rustling silks and satins*,⁷⁶ the former⁷⁷ professor of College Mazarin, the beloved⁷⁸ pupil of M. Arnauld and M. Nicole, *so far*⁷⁹ forgot the austere⁸⁰ [training] of Port Royal *that* [he] *looked at himself in*⁸¹ the glass without *any feeling of mortification*.⁸² "They⁶¹ *tried to make me believe*,"⁸³ he says *in his naive way*,⁸⁴ "that I did not look badly⁸⁵ in this dress,"⁸⁶ and that it *was very becoming*⁸⁷ to me." At all events,⁸⁸ there⁶¹ never was a more Oriental [looking] Elvire, nor [one who looked] *more like the picture*⁸⁹ *we*⁶¹ *have in our mind*⁹⁰ of the fair Scheherazade.

Faithful⁹¹ reader of "Clélie" and of the "Grand Cyrus," Galland regretted that he did not *wield*⁹² Mlle de Scudéry's pen *when he had to describe*⁹³ the exotic and barbaric pomps *of which he was a*⁹⁴ surprised, amused, or frightened witness.⁹⁴ He describes what he sees *in few words*.⁹⁵ *with a discreet*⁹⁶ and yet characteristic gesture.

Galland accompanied the ambassador *on a*⁹⁷ wonderful trip; with the marquis de Nointel, he visited Tenedos *and the site of Troy*.⁹⁸ Then they went to (the island of) Chios, *at that time*⁹⁹ flourishing and prosperous. *In high spirits, they landed in*¹⁰⁰ Delos, Paros, Naxos, in all the Cyclades

with⁵⁹ their sonorous names. . . . After *stopping over*¹⁰¹ in Cyprus, they⁶¹ explored the Syrian¹⁰² coast, Tripoli, Jaffa, the Holy Land, the high valleys of Lebanon.¹⁰²

After he had returned to Paris in possession of several volumes of tales [in] Arabic which he had picked¹⁰³ up *at random in the course of his studious investigations*¹⁰⁴ in the bazars of the East, Antoine Galland wished to see again in [his] imagination the fairy-like scenes of the strange and mysterious countries he had visited in his youth. It was then, after having become a sedentary student of the East, when he was librarian of the "Intendant de Normandie," and, thanks to the king, [a] member of the Academy of inscriptions and belles-lettres that, for his pleasure and for our entertainment,¹⁰⁵ he undertook the translation of the "Thousand and one Nights".

Translated from G. Deschamps.

A Constantinople, pp. 314-316, 326-328, 331 (Calmann-Lévy).

110. The History of the two Indies

Sur "l'Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les Indes," par l'abbé Raynal ..

Franklin and Silas Deane were one day talking [together] [about the many²] blunders¹ in Raynal's book, when the author himself happened³ to step⁴ in. They told him of what they *had been speaking*.⁵ "Nay," says Raynal, "I took the greatest care not to insert⁶ a single fact for which *I had not the most unquestionable authority*."⁷ Deane then fell⁸ on⁹ the story of Polly Baker and declared *of his own certain knowledge*¹⁰ that there had never been a law against bastardy in Massachusetts. Raynal persisted¹¹ that he must have had the whole case¹² from [some source]¹³ of indisputable trustworthiness,¹⁴ until¹⁵ Franklin *broke in*

upon him with a loud laugh,¹⁶ and explained that when¹⁷ he was a *printer of a newspaper*,¹⁸ they¹⁹ were sometimes short²⁰ of news, and to amuse his customers²¹ he invented fictions²² that were as welcome²³ to them as facts. One of these fictions was the legend of Raynal's heroine. The abbé was not *in the least*²⁴ disconcerted. "Very well, Doctor," he replied, "I would rather relate your stories than other²⁵ [men]'s truth."²⁶

When [all] has¹⁹ been said that²⁷ need²⁸ be said about the glaring³⁰ shortcomings²⁹ of the "History of the Indies," *its popularity*³² *still remains to be accounted for*.³¹ If we¹⁹ ask for the causes of this striking³³ success, they¹⁹ are perhaps *not very far to seek*.³⁴ [For one thing],³⁵ the book is remarkable both³⁶ for its variety and its animation. Horace Walpole wrote *about it*³⁷ to Lady Aylesbury in terms that do not at all overstate its liveliness: "It tells³⁹ [one] everything in³⁸ the world; — how *to make*⁴⁰ conquests, invasions, blunders, settlements, bankruptcies, fortunes, etc.; tells you the natural and historical history of all nations; talks⁴¹ commerce, navigation, tea, coffee, china, mines, salt, spices; of⁴² the Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, Danes, Spaniards, Arabs, caravans, Persians, Indians; of Louis XIV and the King of Prussia, of La Bourdonnais, Dupleix, and Admiral Saunders; of rice, and women that dance naked; of camels, gingham,⁴³ and muslin; of millions of millions of lires, pounds, rupees, and cowries; of iron cables and Circassian women; of Law and the Mississippi; *and against*⁴⁴ all governments and religions."

All this is really not too *highly colored*.⁴⁵ And Raynal's cosmorama *exactly hit the tastes of the hour*.⁴⁶ The readers of that day *were full of a new curiosity*⁴⁷ about the world outside⁴⁸ of France, and the less known families⁴⁹ of the

human stock.⁴⁹ It was no doubt more⁵⁰ [like the] curiosity of keen-witted children than [the] curiosity [of] science.⁵¹ Montesquieu first⁵² stirred⁵³ this interest in⁵⁴ the unfamiliar⁵⁶ (forms of) custom, institution, creed, motive, and daily manners.⁵⁵ But while *Montesquieu treated such matters fragmentarily, and in connection with a more or less abstract discussion*⁵⁷ on polity, Raynal made them the objects of a vivid and concrete picture, and presented them in the easier shape of a systematic history.

Diderot, II, p. 210 (Macmillan), by John Morley.

Franklin read and admired the book in London. Black⁵⁸ Toussaint Louverture in his *slave-cabin*⁵⁹ at Hayti laboriously⁶⁰ spelled *his way through its pages*,⁶¹ and found in their⁵⁸ story of the *wrongs of*⁶³ his race and their passionate appeal against slavery, the first [definite⁶²] expression of thoughts which had already⁶⁴ been dimly stirred⁶⁵ in his generous spirit [by⁶⁶] the brutalities that were every day enacted⁶⁷ under his eyes. Gibbon solemnly immortalized Raynal by describing him, in one of the great⁶⁸ chapters of the *Decline and Fall*, as a writer who, “*with a just confidence*⁶⁹ had prefixed⁷⁰ to his own history⁷¹ the honorable epithets of political and philosophical.” Robertson, [whose⁷²] excellent *History of America*, covering⁷³ part of Raynal’s ground,⁷⁴ was⁷⁵ not published until 1777, complimented Raynal on his ingenuity and eloquence, and reproduced⁷⁶ some of Raynal’s speculations.⁷⁷

Frederick the Great began to read it, and for some days spoke enthusiastically to his French *satellites at dinner*⁷⁸ of its eloquence and reason. All at once he became silent, and he *never spoke a word about the book again*.⁷⁹ He had suddenly

come across half a dozen pages of vigorous rhapsodizing,⁸⁰ delivered⁸¹ for his [own] good.

JOHN MORLEY.

Diderot, II, pp. 218, 219 (Macmillan).

111. L'art de critiquer sans avoir l'air d'y toucher

Les Lettres persanes. Les Lettres anglaises.

Les deux Persans que Montesquieu fait voyager en France rappellent, par leur tour d'esprit, Tavernier et Chardin, à cela près que Montesquieu leur prête, à tous les deux, son esprit vif et piquant qui donne aux critiques le trait qui porte. Cette critique-là, cependant, est loin d'être la plus dangereuse: Montesquieu avait, dans son carquois, bien d'autres flèches. Voltaire et lui ont porté à son point de perfection l'art de critiquer en ayant l'air de faire des compliments. Lorsqu'un Persan admire le gouvernement français parce qu'il ressemble à celui du sultan, cela donne à penser. Lorsque Voltaire, sans écrire une seule fois le mot de tolérance, donne au lecteur une leçon de choses en le faisant assister à son entrevue avec un quaker qui lui fait gentiment la leçon, il impose au lecteur une constante collaboration dans la critique: tout ce qu'il loue chez les Anglais fait défaut en France. De cette visite chez un quaker, le lecteur retire une leçon de tolérance: cette secte aux idées bizarres n'est pas persécutée; une leçon de sincérité et de simplicité dans les manières et dans les paroles; et puis, si le lecteur ne devient pas antimilitariste, ce n'est vraiment pas la faute de Voltaire, qui a bien voulu prêter à son bénin quaker, pour prêcher une doctrine si subversive, une étincelle de son esprit; car le piquant du dialogue fait mieux ressortir la force de sa sensibilité émue.

La critique des mœurs, telle que l'ont comprise Montesquieu et Voltaire, devait exercer une influence même en Angleterre. On la retrouve chez Goldsmith lorsque, se laissant gagner à l'idée de la fraternité des peuples mise à la mode par Montesquieu, il représente un philosophe chinois qui, par l'intérêt qu'il prend à la civilisation anglaise, mérite à juste titre d'être appelé «A Citizen of the World».

112. 'Persian Letters' by Montesquieu

The inhabitants of Paris carry¹ inquisitiveness *to extravagance*.² When I arrived, I was looked at as if I had been sent from heaven; old men, men, women, children, all wished to see me. When³ I went out, everybody *looked out of the windows*;⁴ if I went to the Tuileries I immediately saw a circle gathering⁵ around me; even the women made a rainbow around me formed⁶ of [a] thousand hues which surrounded me. If I happened to be at the theatre, a hundred opera glasses⁷ were instantly directed⁸ upon my face; well, no man has ever been seen as much as I have been. Yet I smiled sometimes to hear people, who had hardly been out of their rooms, say to each other: "*we must acknowledge*⁹ that he has a [marked] Persian air."¹⁰ *The wonderful thing about it was that*¹¹ I found *portraits of mine*¹² everywhere; I saw my *duplicates*¹³ in all the shops, on all the mantelpieces; *people were so afraid*¹⁴ of not having seen me enough.

*So much*¹⁵ attention will finally *become tedious*;¹⁶ I never thought¹⁷ I was such a rare and odd man; and although I hold¹⁸ [a] good opinion of myself, *it would never have come into my head*¹⁹ that I might²⁰ disturb the peace of a large city where I was not known at all. This induced²¹ me to

leave the Persian costume and to put²³ on a European²⁴ one,²² in order to see if there would still be in my physiognomy something *worthy of admiration*.²⁵ This test²⁶ *made me realize*²⁷ what I really was worth,²⁸ [when I was] rid²⁹ of all foreign ornaments, I saw myself appreciated *at my real value*.³⁰ *I had good reasons*³¹ to *complain about*³² my tailor who made me lose in one moment the attention and the esteem [of the] public, for I suddenly *dropped into utter nothingness*.³³ I remained³⁴ sometimes [for] a [whole] hour in³⁵ a company without having³⁶ been noticed and without having³⁶ been given *a*³⁷ chance³⁸ of opening my³⁷ mouth; but if perchance somebody informed the company that I was [a] Persian, I immediately heard around me a [sort of] buzzing:³⁹ "Well,⁴⁰ Well! This gentleman is [a] Persian! That is a very extraordinary thing. How *is it possible*⁴¹ to be [a] Persian?"

Lettre XXX. Rica à Ibben.

113. Selection from Voltaire's 'English Letters'

I thought¹ that the doctrine and the history of a sect² as extraordinary as the Quakers *would be of interest*³ to a sensible⁴ man. In order *to find out something about them*,⁵ *I called on*⁶ one of the most celebrated Quakers in⁷ England, who, after having been for thirty years in business,⁸ had known [how] *to set a limit to his wealth*⁹ and to his wishes, and had retired¹⁰ to a country place in the vicinity of London. I visited¹¹ him in his retreat; it was a small¹² but well-built house, and *its only ornament was its neatness*.¹³ The Quaker, an¹⁴ old man [with a ruddy complexion¹⁵], had¹⁶ never been ill, because *he had always been free from*¹⁷ passions and from¹⁸ intemperance; never in⁷ my life did I see more distinguished and *more prepossessing manner*¹⁹ than his. He wore,²⁰ like

all those of his religion, a coat without folds on the sides and without buttons [either] on the pockets or¹⁸ on the sleeves; he wore²¹ a large hat *with the brim hanging down*²² like our priests.²³ He received me with his hat on his²⁴ head, and *moved toward*²⁵ me without *bending in the slightest degree*,²⁶ but there was more politeness in the open and *kindly expression*²⁷ of his face than there is in *our custom*²⁸ of drawing one leg behind the other, and carrying in²⁹ our²⁴ hands what is made to cover our²⁴ heads. "Friend," he said, "I see that thou art [a] stranger; if I can *be of any use*³⁰ to thee, thou *needst but*³¹ speak." "Sir," I said, bending low and slipping³² one foot forward,³³ *according to*³⁴ our fashion, "I flatter myself that my natural curiosity will not displease you and that *you will be kind enough*³⁵ to do me the honor of instructing me in⁷ your religion."

"The people from thy country," he answered, "pay³⁶ too many compliments and *bow too much*,³⁷ but *up to this time*³⁸ I have not seen any of them who had³⁹ the same interest. Come in, and first let us dine together." Again I payed³⁶ a few bad compliments, because you cannot get rid⁴⁰ of your habits all at once; and, after a wholesome and frugal meal which began and ended by a prayer to God, I *began to cross-question*⁴¹ him. I *opened the conversation with*⁴² a question often asked by good Catholics to the Huguenots. "My dear Sir," said I, "were you ever baptized?" "No," answered the Quaker, "and my brethren have not been." "*Good gracious*,"⁴³ said I, "[is it possible] then⁴⁴ you are not Christians?" "Friend," said he gently,⁴⁵ "do not swear; we are Christians, but we do not think that Christianity consists in²⁹ having our²⁴ heads sprinkled⁴⁶ with a little salt and water." "*Oh! dear me*,"⁴⁷ I went on, indignant⁴⁸ at⁷ such impiety, "then you must have forgotten that Jesus Christ was baptized by John."

"Friend," no swearing,⁴⁹ *I ask thee again*,⁵⁰ said the benignant⁵¹ Quaker. "Christ was baptized by John, but he never baptized any one;⁵² we are not John's disciples, but Christ's." "Well," I exclaimed, "how the holy inquisition would burn you [at the stake]. . . . In the name of God, dear man, *let me*⁵³ baptize you!" "If *this were the only thing required*,⁵⁴ we might condescend to your weakness," he answered gravely; "we do not condemn anybody for *going through the formality*⁵⁵ of baptism, but we believe that those who profess a thoroughly⁵⁶ spiritual and⁵⁶ holy religion should abstain¹⁰ as much as they can from any judaïc ceremony." You see how the saintly man was rather⁵⁸ speciously *making the most*⁵⁷ of three or four passages from the Holy Scripture which seemed to favor his sect; *in perfect good faith*⁵⁹ he was forgetting [all about] a hundred different passages which *utterly condemned*⁶⁰ him. I *carefully refrained*⁶¹ from entering upon a *controversy with him*,⁶² you cannot, in any way, *bring round*⁶³ an enthusiast; *you should not tell*⁶⁴ a man [what] the faults of his mistress [are], neither [point out] *to him who has a lawsuit*⁶⁵ the weak [points] of his case, or reason with a fanatic; therefore I ventured⁶⁶ another question.

"About⁶⁷ communion," I said, "how do you use⁵⁵ it?" "We do not use it," he said. "What! no communion?" "No, *except the communion*⁶⁸ of hearts." Then he again quoted the Scriptures. He *preached for my benefit a fine sermon*⁶⁹ against communion and, *as if divinely inspired*,⁷⁰ he spoke to show that the holy sacraments were all of human invention, and that the word sacrament did not appear⁷¹ a single time in the Bible. "Excuse my ignorance," he said, "I have not brought⁷² [forward] one hundredth of the proofs in favour of my religion, but thou canst find them in the exposition of our faith by Robert Barclay: it is one of the best books

which ever came³⁹ from the hand of man. Our enemies acknowledge⁷³ that it is very dangerous; it proves how reasonable it is." I promised him to read this book, and my Quaker thought I was already converted. Then, in a few words, he gave me a reason⁷⁴ for the oddities⁷⁵ which expose his sect to the scorn of the others. "Acknowledge,"⁷⁶ he said, "that thou hadst some difficulty in refraining⁷⁷ from laughing when I answered all thy *polite speeches*⁷⁸ with my hat on my²⁴ head, *calling thee 'thou,'*⁷⁹ yet thou seemest to me too [well] informed⁸⁰ *to be ignorant*⁸¹ [of the fact] that in⁷ the time of Christ no nation incurred⁸² the ridicule of substituting the plural for the singular. They used to say to Caesar Augustus: 'I love thee, I pray thee, I thank thee;' he did not even allow⁸³ people⁸⁴ to call³⁹ him Sir, Lord. It was only much later that men *took it into their heads*⁸⁵ *to have themselves called*⁸⁶ you instead of *thou*, as if they were double, and to usurp the impertinent titles of greatness, eminence, holiness, and even Divinity which some earthworms give to other earthworms. Other men wear the badges⁸⁷ of their dignity, and we, those of Christian humility; we flee from worldly⁸⁸ assemblies, theaters, or *places of gambling*;⁸⁹ *we would be very much to be pitied if we were*⁹⁰ to fill with trifles a heart in which God *is to dwell*;⁹¹ we never *take an oath*,⁹² not even in court,⁹³ we think that the name of the Almighty⁹⁴ should not be prostituted [by being used] in the wretched quarrels⁹⁵ of men. When *we are summoned to appear in presence of*⁹⁶ magistrates for other people's business (for we never have any lawsuits), *we give our testimony*⁹⁷ by [saying] Yes or No, and the judges *take us at our mere word*,⁹⁸ while other Christians *commit perjury*⁹⁹ in swearing by the Bible. We never go to war; *not that*¹⁰⁰ we are³⁹ afraid of death, — on the contrary, we bless the time which makes us one with the

Supreme Being,¹⁰¹ but [our reason¹⁰² is that] we are neither wolves, nor tigers, nor bulldogs, but men, but Christians. And, when, after battles which have been won, the whole city of London is illuminated, when¹⁰³ the sky is ablaze¹⁰³ with fireworks, when¹⁰³ the air *resounds with prayers*,¹⁰⁴ with bell ringing, organ playing, and booming cannons, we bewail¹⁰⁵ in silence the murders which cause this public rejoicing."¹⁰⁶

PART III

114. Du Réalisme au Romantisme

Du réalisme au romantisme une route conduit; partant d'Espagne, elle traverse la France, passe en Angleterre et, par un brusque retour, revient en France. Suivons-la; des romans marqueront les étapes.

Une fois seulement, les Français et les Anglais se sont rencontrés à mi-chemin dans le domaine du goût. Ce fut au XVIII^{me} siècle. A l'influence anglaise qui dirigea l'épanouissement de la pensée française, la France ne peut guère opposer la sienne que dans la correspondance et le roman; mais là, elle est certes intéressante, puisque, avec Lesage, le réalisme arriva à l'unité artistique et qu'avec Rousseau, le romantisme prit naissance. En comparant entre eux Lesage, Marivaux, Richardson et Rousseau, on peut suivre pas à pas l'évolution graduelle où chacun des deux pays fournit son apport.

Au XVII^{me} siècle, le réalisme français a une double origine: nationale et étrangère. A côté des romans où Mlle de Scudéry déguisait si bien les grands personnages de son temps sous les oripeaux de l'histoire ancienne qu'ils en devenaient méconnaissables, il y avait, sous forme de portraits et de caractères, une littérature qui porte l'empreinte de ce vigoureux réalisme qui trouva chez La Bruyère sa plus complète expression. Quoique La Bruyère s'attache surtout à peindre la còur et la ville, on ne peut oublier le tableau où il représente les paysans comme «des animaux farouches». On sent déjà que l'âpre originalité vient d'en bas. A côté de cela, des parodies, des bouffonneries, dans le goût

espagnol, preparent le public à goûter le *Roman bourgeois* de Furetière. Mais au XVIII^{me} siècle, sous l'influence de l'Espagne, le réalisme s'implanta définitivement en France. Dans *Gil Blas*, Lesage représenta la société dans son ensemble, comme formant un tableau où chaque partie a ses proportions normales. Dans le roman picaresque, les auteurs espagnols ne sortaient guère des bas-fonds de la société; comme eux, Lesage place d'abord son héros dans un entourage des plus modestes; puis, lui faisant traverser tous les milieux, il finit par le placer dans l'intimité des grands: tour à tour valet, précepteur, secrétaire, *Gil Blas* est toujours bien placé pour voir le revers de la médaille. Cette idée primordiale, empruntée au roman picaresque, prend en France une bien autre étendue et une force redoublée: celle de l'actualité. Dans la réalité on rencontrait des types de ce genre-là; la société, en se désagrégeant, avait rendu la chose possible; un homme capable ou simplement entreprenant pouvait, par la force du mérite ou des circonstances, se trouver porté au premier rang; ou, en jouant des coudes, il pouvait se frayer un chemin au milieu de la foule de ceux qui n'avaient d'autre mérite que la naissance. «En Espagne, le roman picaresque retrace toujours l'histoire des friponneries d'un pauvre diable; fripon il est, fripon il reste; il n'y a pas de développement de caractère.» La grande originalité de Lesage fut de donner au héros qu'il créa un caractère; puis, au front du personnage il imprima le sceau du réalisme français: la médiocrité. A force d'être dupe, *Gil Blas* apprend lui aussi à faire des dupes; «la leçon du malheur lui montre qu'il y a un moment où il faut choisir sa voie, rouler dans les bas-fonds ou entrer dans la vie honnête; il se corrige.»

Lesage a adouci le réalisme espagnol; rien chez lui ne rap-

pelle l'âpreté du roman picaresque; en retranchant les détails trop crus, en laissant tomber comme un poids mort tout le verbiage qu'il considérait «comme des moralités inutiles», il a allégé son œuvre et lui a donné un cachet artistique conforme au but qu'il se proposait, puisque le roman est un genre fait pour amuser.

Longtemps les Espagnols refusèrent de croire que Gil Blas pût être l'œuvre d'un Français, préférant supposer qu'il y avait eu un original espagnol qui s'était perdu; sur cette question, qui a été définitivement tranchée au grand honneur de Lesage, M^{me} Emilia Pardo Bazán a écrit dans «La Cuestión palpitante» un passage intéressant, où elle dit leur fait à ses compatriotes.

La France du XVIII^{me} siècle eut un réaliste qui fit un pas de plus. En représentant, sans l'aide d'aucun déguisement, la société de son temps: Marivaux fit une œuvre profondément originale. En outre, il tirait parti d'une idée neuve: c'est une jeune fille qui est le personnage principal et qui plus est, une jeune fille honnête; le point de départ est donc entièrement différent. Le domaine de Marivaux sera naturellement plus restreint; il nous fera surtout connaître le monde des couvents et celui des salons. Mais, dira-t-on, sous le rapport des mœurs, le monde des salons laissait beaucoup à désirer! Pour en faire la protectrice de son héroïne, Marivaux prit pour modèle l'une des femmes les plus distinguées de son temps: M^{me} de Lambert, une précieuse de la vieille roche, une femme vraiment supérieure. On dit que c'est d'elle que Marivaux tenait l'idéal élevé qu'il a proposé pour modèle à son siècle. Il était alors de bon ton de prendre le mariage à la légère. Pour remédier au mal, M^{me} de Lambert pensait que la première chose à faire serait de laisser aux intéressés la liberté du choix. Dans

«La Vie de Marianne», Marivaux représente une mère qui laisse son fils libre de suivre son inclination ; elle l'encourage même à épouser l'orpheline sans fortune et sans nom. Marivaux, en suivant de trop près le modèle qu'il avait choisi, a rendu exactement le ton subtil et quintessencié qu'on appelait alors «lambertinage» et qui, dans son œuvre, devient du «marivaudage». Si son roman est démodé aujourd'hui, c'est là qu'il faut en chercher la cause. Vers le milieu du XVIII^{me} siècle, on était fatigué du ton maniéré ; les lettres du temps en font foi. Si on admire tant les Anglais, c'est qu'ils disent les choses sans ambages. C'est sans doute pour cette raison que Marivaux n'a pas fait école, tandis que le romancier anglais Richardson, traitant des sujets analogues, a exercé sur la littérature française une influence incontestable ; mais lui, laissait courir sa plume au gré de sa fantaisie. Pour saisir les traits caractéristiques des deux romanciers, prenons deux scènes parallèles tirées de «La Vie de Marianne» et de l'histoire de «Paméla». Ces deux jeunes filles, élevées par charité, se trouvent, vers l'âge de seize ans, privées de leur protectrice. Il y a à remarquer une différence initiale qui est de toute importance : Marianne, bien qu'elle ne sache rien de ses parents, croit fermement qu'elle est d'origine noble ; sa distinction naturelle, sa grâce, donnent à tous ceux qui l'approchent la même impression ; Paméla, elle, est franchement plébéienne : on connaît ses parents, de pauvres gens qui n'ont pour tout bien que leur honnêteté. Toutes les deux ont subi les mêmes influences. Elles sortent d'un milieu modeste, où on leur a inculqué le respect de la vertu ; protégées par des femmes du monde, elles acquièrent ensuite les agréments qui les font valoir ; exposées aux tentations, elles en sortent triomphantes ; réduites à gagner leur vie, elles font de la couture.

Mais, tandis que Paméla est une petite servante, Marianne se révolte à l'idée d'entrer en service et préfère travailler dans la boutique de M^{me} Dutour. Il est une scène en particulier qui fait bien ressortir le contraste entre Marianne et Paméla. Toutes les deux, et pour cause, ont décidé de renvoyer à leur protecteur l'argent et les vêtements qu'elles ont reçus : tandis que Marianne fait un paquet, Paméla en fait *trois* ; tout le reste est à l'avenant. Marivaux réserve les détails pour l'analyse des sentiments, car il se pique d'en indiquer les nuances les plus fines. Marianne est vertueuse . . . et coquette ; elle jouit de porter des vêtements bien faits et, tandis qu'il ne lui en coûte rien de rendre l'argent, elle ne peut s'empêcher de chercher des excuses pour porter aussi longtemps que possible la jolie robe qui lui va si bien. Marivaux ne nous en dit pas plus long. Richardson, au contraire, prend un véritable plaisir à décrire par le menu le trousseau que son humble héroïne a confectionné de ses propres mains : son petit bonnet à nœud vert, sa robe de bure, son manteau ouaté, son chapeau à brides bleues, son mouchoir de coton, et jusqu'aux mitaines de laine qu'elle a achetées au marchand ambulant. Puis, il nous montre Paméla serrant sur son cœur ce paquet qui représente tout son avoir et se réjouissant d'avoir conservé son innocence.

Ces descriptions minutieuses des choses extérieures, c'était alors du nouveau en littérature ; en outre, en France, un lointain idéal d'innocence et de simplicité commençait à se dessiner et Richardson répondait à cet idéal.

Marianne avait beau avoir de la vertu, elle n'en parlait pas, gardant sur ce sujet la réserve d'une femme du monde. Paméla, aux yeux de Diderot et de ses amis, était l'incarnation de la vertu plébéienne et, ce qui ajoutait à son charme, elle se présentait sous un costume qui, dans sa simplicité,

était le dernier cri de l'exotisme anglais. Et puis, et surtout, on se laissa gagner par le sentiment qui débordait de partout. Même lorsque le sentiment dégénérait en sensiblerie, il répondait à un besoin du moment. Depuis un siècle et demi, les écrivains ne s'adressaient plus qu'à la raison; au milieu de cette aridité, le cœur finissait par se dessécher; on le sentit, et d'instinct on se laissa entraîner par le sentiment qui allait tout rafraîchir et tout vivifier. C'était toute une éducation à faire; l'expansion ne s'apprend pas en un jour, et il est beaucoup plus facile de passer la mesure que de trouver, dans le juste milieu, la perfection. Si le don des larmes eut parfois, dans son exagération, quelque chose de comique, nous devons cependant savoir gré aux écrivains qui, en développant ce côté de notre nature, ont adouci les mœurs. On était bien dur au XVII^{me} siècle, même ceux qui se piquaient de sentiment: Mme de Sévigné par exemple. Si nous le sommes moins aujourd'hui, c'est aux écrivains du XVIII^{me} siècle que nous le devons.

Si Diderot, si Rousseau furent profondément impressionnés par Richardson, c'est qu'en eux l'instinct naturel qui faisait écho, tout en répercutant la sensation, y ajoutait quelque chose. Chez Rousseau, ce fut la passion; il ne faisait que suivre son penchant, il l'a avoué lui-même: «Je sentis avant de penser, je n'avais aucune idée des choses que tous les sentiments m'étaient déjà connus. Je n'avais rien conçu, j'avais tout senti.» C'est parce qu'il sut parler la langue de la passion que Rousseau se fit écouter en maître; sous ce rapport, il laissait Richardson bien loin derrière lui. Et pourtant, Richardson fut son maître. En écrivant la *Nouvelle Héloïse*, il le suit d'assez près dans la peinture des caractères; Pamela et Clarissa l'inspirent tour à tour, Julie et sa cousine, l'une douce et l'autre enjouée, rappellent

Clarissa et Miss Howe; dans les deux romans, la mère, insignifiante et faible, ne joue qu'un rôle effacé; le père, dur et violent, est entiché de noblesse; seulement, au triste Lovelace Rousseau se substitue lui-même sous les traits de Saint-Preux. Rousseau, en écrivant son roman, a toujours Richardson dans l'esprit; s'il ne le suit pas, il le réfute. Ne va-t-il pas jusqu'à écrire en note, au bas d'une page où il contredit l'auteur anglais au sujet de l'amour à première vue: «Que pensez-vous de cela, M. Richardson?» Pour découvrir les défauts du maître, il n'est rien de tel que... l'élève. Rousseau savait par sa propre expérience que le sentiment de la nature, en s'alliant à la passion, était susceptible de lui donner une beauté inoubliable. C'est ce que Richardson n'avait pas compris.

En France, avant Rousseau, on aimait la vie en plein air. Le cabinet de travail de Lesage était au fond d'un jardin; pour y arriver, on passait sous une sorte de «pergola» plafonnée de plantes grimpantes; cependant, on a beau feuilleter ses romans, nulle part on ne sent monter des pages le parfum du chèvrefeuille qui, dans son jardin, embaumait.

Marivaux ne fait guère mieux. Marianne va passer une journée à la campagne; à peine arrivée, elle et son amie courent jusqu'à un petit bois tout proche de la maison et, comme Valville les poursuit, elles s'amuse à lui jeter au visage des poignées de feuilles: rapide et gracieuse vision!

C'est dans un jardin que Marianne se trouve lorsqu'elle se rend compte de l'indifférence de Valville. Mais ce jardin, nous ne le voyons pas; il était sans doute à la mode du temps, à la française, avec des allées droites et un jet d'eau au bout; dans ce cas, Marivaux est bien excusable de ne pas l'avoir décrit minutieusement. Dans la réalité, on commençait à se rendre compte qu'il y avait mieux à faire; on essayait,

sans trop de succès, d'avoir des jardins anglais, ce qui a donné à Horace Walpole une belle occasion de faire des gorges chaudes. Mais aussi, les gens du monde étaient incapables de trouver par eux-mêmes ce qu'il fallait. Les Anglais, eux, qui avaient de véritables jardins, ne songeaient pas non plus à les décrire. Clarissa Harlowe en traverse un tous les jours; mais, tout ce que nous en savons, c'est qu'il était entouré d'un mur très haut.

Ce que personne alors ne pouvait faire, Rousseau l'accomplit. Il était admirablement préparé. Par la pratique d'abord: chez Mme de Warens, il travaillait au jardin; mauvais ouvrier, mais bon observateur, il sut tirer parti de ces connaissances pratiques, dont on ne saurait exagérer l'importance. L'étude de la botanique lui fut utile aussi; les physiocrates attirèrent sans doute son attention vers l'irrigation dont la nature lui avait déjà révélé le secret; en parcourant les Alpes ruisselantes, n'avait-il pas vu cette merveille: la terre se parant de fleurs jusque sous les neiges. En lisant Richardson, il avait compris qu'il y avait mieux à faire: il fallait compléter, par des descriptions de la nature, l'impression causée par la lutte des passions. Il le fit. Quand Saint-Preux, en proie à une lutte intérieure, sent le besoin de s'isoler, c'est dans les Alpes qu'il va chercher l'apaisement. Pour peindre la grandeur sauvage des montagnes et leurs riants aspects, Rousseau sut trouver les accents d'une admirable poésie. Plus tard, voulant montrer la beauté des travaux champêtres qui remplissent une vie bien réglée, il nous montre son héroïne assagie découvrant la poésie des jardins. Tandis qu'on se représente Paméla surtout à la cuisine, la cuillère en main, remuant confitures, gelées, cordiaux, Rousseau nous montre Julie travaillant en plein air. Levée de bon matin, elle assiste à la gracieuse

fête que chaque année ramène l'automne. Avec un art admirable, Rousseau nous fait sentir la valeur musicale de tous les joyeux bruits du travail; en se confondant ils forment une sorte de symphonie: les coups de marteaux qui retentissent à intervalles réguliers, le pas lourd des travailleurs «qui portent la vendange au pressoir», voilà la basse continue sur laquelle se détache, gracieuse, la mélodie des chansons. Puis, une impression artistique d'un autre ordre: c'est une brume qui, en se levant comme un rideau, laisse voir le ciel radieux et les travailleurs groupés en un mouvant tableau. Active, Julie va de l'un à l'autre, choisissant pour le faire cueillir «avant le lever du soleil, le raisin rouge qu'on portera doucement sur le pressoir, encore couvert de sa fleur et de sa rosée, pour en exprimer le vin blanc.» Entre maîtres et ouvriers, la bienveillance règne; il y a même une sorte de fraternité du travail qui donne à toute cette scène une certaine beauté morale. A la paix des champs vient s'harmoniser la paix de l'âme. En faisant ressortir la beauté plastique et musicale des scènes qu'il décrit, Rousseau fait œuvre d'artiste et, par la profondeur du sentiment de la nature, il est véritablement un grand poète. C'est lui qui, presque au seuil du XIX^{me} siècle, sut rouvrir les sources de la poésie lyrique taries depuis plus d'un siècle.

115. Origin of the romance of roguery

Le roman picaresque

La vie de Lazarille de Tormes. — Préface de Morel-Fatio.

The conquest of Granada, the discovery of America, the expulsion of the Jews, the Italian¹ wars, all these events of prime² importance which marked the reign of the Catholic Kings, resulted³ [in] thoroughly⁴ modifying the ancient

organization of the land. The hierarchy of classes and of individuals was disturbed,⁵ *men who, up to this time, had been strictly confined to their*⁶ [native] provinces and who had lived in a *condition bordering on*⁷ slavery were suddenly called to independence, *being led away from their native heath*⁸ by the propaganda of the discoverers⁹ and of the conquerors. *From the heights*¹⁰ of the Asturian mountains, from Castile and from Navarre, *gangs which were not unlike*¹¹ streams¹² of lava came down to¹³ the Andalusian¹ seaports, where¹⁴ *the drums beating to arms called them to*¹⁵ Italy and to the Indies; *at the seaports*¹⁶ [they] crowded¹⁷ into the caravels and galleys *on the point of sailing*,¹⁸ these¹⁹ [men were] plain people hardened by misery and by the climate of their native country, who¹⁹ had been over-excited and *carried away*²¹ *beyond all belief*²² by wonderful tales and wild²⁰ promises. *They were neither all*²³ to return or²³ to become rich. The gold of the Indies or the spoils²⁴ brought back from Italy benefited²⁵ only a *small minority*,²⁶ but such was the enthusiasm²⁷ that the disappointments²⁸ and *the hardships these men had endured*²⁹ could not for³¹ a long time *allay the fever*.³⁰ The great army of adventurers increased³² *from year to year*,³³ and, during the first half of the sixteenth century, Spain was, *so to speak, devoured by a spreading*³⁴ leprosy of outcasts,³⁵ [the] wrecks³⁶ of unsuccessful³⁷ wars, of distant³⁸ expeditions *which had come to grief*,³⁹ of disasters on land and⁴⁰ sea. And as, in reality, the temperament of the race had not been altered,⁴¹ as⁴² the ideas *handed down*⁴³ from the middle ages had persisted — ideas which in the heroic age of monarchy had had their prestige and their usefulness, as⁴² *the deprecatory attitude*⁴⁴ towards⁴⁵ manual labor, business,⁴⁶ and *money transactions*⁴⁷ *was as formerly a fundamental belief*⁴⁸ of the nation, as⁴² Spain, moreover,⁴⁹ [being] deprived of her Jews

and her Moors was becoming poorer⁵⁰ every day,⁵³ it came to pass⁵¹ that these men, being out of their element,⁵² instead of helping to form a sort of middle-class⁵³ half-way between the nobility and the serfs bound to the soil,⁵⁴ — which, in time,⁵⁵ might have laid the foundation for⁵⁶ the prosperity of Spain — it came to pass that these men formed, in order to live on the Commons of⁵⁷ beggary⁵⁸ and theft,⁵⁹ a great association of roguery⁶⁰ and idleness.⁶¹ From this association sprung the “*picaro*”,⁶² and it is this new type, this indigenous product which is by no means an anomaly in Spain, in the time we refer to,⁶³ which our novel faithfully⁶⁴ reflected.

116. The life of Lazarillo de Tormes

Selection from the Preface

History [of] literature¹ is fully justified² [in] considering our novel as the prototype of the romance of roguery;³ literary history considers Lazarillo as the father of all tales of beggary⁴ which, for nearly a century, swarmed⁵ on Spanish soil and which have given us, through the medium of⁶ Gil Blas, our modern novel of manners.⁷

Two methods have contributed to the formation of this literary form⁸ in which [the] Spaniards have excelled: the autobiographical story⁹ and the satire upon contemporary manners. The hero speaks in his own name, relates himself the story of his life; this [narration in the first person] is the chief characteristic;¹⁰ but what the hero tells is almost¹¹ prescribed to him in¹² advance, he moves in a limited¹³ circle of ideas, sentiments, situations, he is not free,¹⁴ like the heroes of romances of chivalry or of pastorals, to drift¹⁵ into more or less extraordinary adventures entirely created by his imagination running riot;¹⁶ he must belong¹⁷ to his

own country and to his own time, [remain] as close¹⁸ to reality as possible, *give a lifelike picture*,¹⁹ for, the aim of his work²⁰ being specially to satirize²¹ contemporary follies and vices, it is necessary that the allusions *strike home*²² and that the models selected by the narrator easily recognize themselves in his pictures.²³ And this aspect of the literature, this social satire, this picture of contemporary²⁴ customs [drawn from life²⁵] is so clearly²⁶ the essential²⁷ [feature] that, in reading any one²⁸ of the *romances of roguery*,³ you very easily lose sight of the hero of the story,²⁹ in order to *give your entire attention*³⁰ to the background;³¹ I mean the description of the different surroundings³² through which the rogue³⁴ passes,³³ and the social types³⁵ he elbows³⁶ on the road while *making his way through*³⁷ the world.

Elsewhere, on the other hand,³⁸ for example in English novels such as Robinson [Crusoe], and many others indirectly derived from ours, the hero is all [important] and, *on account of*³⁹ the extraordinary interest he excites and the sympathy he inspires, monopolizes³⁹ the entire attention of the reader; here, he is almost of no account. Who cares⁴⁰ [about] the adventures of Lazarillo or Guzman, who cares⁴⁰ whether they act in⁴¹ such and such a manner,⁴² whether they die a little sooner or a little later? These rogues³⁴ do not have an individuality; they are means⁴³ used by the writer⁴⁴ to lead us into the different *corners and hidden nooks*⁴⁵ of a society which he wishes to search⁴⁶ in order to reveal⁴⁷ its corruption.⁴⁸

While the English writer gives his hero a character, a will, and passions, the gradual development of which he attempts⁴⁹ to show by means⁵⁰ of events, our rogues,⁵¹ ruled⁵² by some kind of fatality, are incapable of *reasoned action*⁵³ and of personal feeling.

The *romance of roguery*³ is a novel of manners⁷ rather than a novel of adventure; besides it is, to a considerable⁵⁴ degree, a satirical novel. Spain has always had a⁵⁵ gift for criticism, satire, epigram; *witness Seneca*⁵⁶ and Martial.

... Taken *by themselves independently*,⁵⁷ the three first chapters of *Lazarillo* form a sort of little epic⁵⁸ of Spanish poverty⁵⁹ and hunger; specially of hunger which is the soul of the book, this sharp,⁶⁰ persistent hunger which goes through⁶¹ you and hurts⁶² you, which you think you feel yourself, and which seems to grapple⁶³ you by⁶⁴ the throat. The impression produced by this crescendo of privations and by the exasperation of these starving⁶⁵ [people] is really very strong.

From the French of Morel-Fatio.

117. How *Lazarillo de Tormes* became the servant¹ of a priest who lets him starve²

Being then in this affliction, *may God keep from it every faithful Christian*,³ and finding⁴ myself going from bad to worse,⁵ without being able to remedy it, one day while my anxious, wicked, and miserly⁶ master was out⁷ of the village, there chanced⁸ to come to my door a tinker⁹ whom I *took for*¹⁰ an angel by God sent under this garb.¹¹ He asked me if I had something to mend.¹² "In me you would find enough to mend and *it would be no small task for you*¹³ to put me together,"¹⁴ said I so low that he did not hear me. But as I had no time to lose in palavering,¹⁵ I said to him, as if enlightened¹⁶ by the Holy Ghost: "Uncle, I have lost the key to this chest, and I am afraid my master will give me a whipping;¹⁷ *I beg of you*,¹⁸ see if, among those you carry, you cannot find one¹⁹ which will open it; I will pay you for it." The angelical tinker then began to try²⁰ several keys from the

large bunch²¹ he was carrying, while I was helping him with my feeble²² prayers. And lo,²³ *at the very moment*²⁴ I was least expecting²⁵ it, I see the chest open, and, at the bottom [of it], in the shape of a loaf of bread, the face of God, as they say. "I have no money to give you for the key," said I, "but repay yourself with this." He took from the loaves²⁷ the one he liked²⁸ best, and, having given me the key, he went away²⁹ satisfied. As for me, I was still more³¹ so,³⁰ but, at³² that time, I did not *tamper with*³³ anything, so as not to attract attention to the trickery³⁴ and also because, feeling³⁵ that *I had in my possession*³⁵ such a treasure,³⁶ I persuaded myself that hunger would not dare come near me. My wretched³⁷ master returned and God granted³⁸ that he did not notice³⁹ the offering the angel had taken away. The next day,⁴⁰ after he had gone out, I opened my paradise [of bread] and I took between my hands and teeth a loaf²⁷ which, in³² [the time it would take to say] two creedes, I *spirited away*,⁴¹ not forgetting to lock the chest again. Then I began to sweep the house, persuaded that with this remedy I would soon be able to better⁴² my wretched condition. By this means,⁴³ I kept up my spirits⁴⁴ through this day and the following; but it was not my fate⁴⁵ to enjoy this peace [a] long time, for [on] the third day the fever terce⁴⁶ was⁴⁷ on me at its appointed time,⁴⁸ in the shape⁴⁹ of him who was starving² me to death, whom I saw at an *unwonted time*⁵⁰ bending over our chest, turning over and over,⁵¹ counting and recounting the loaves. I dissembled,⁵² and in⁵³ my secret prayers, devotions, and supplications I said: "Saint John, seal⁵⁴ his eyes."

After remaining a *long while*⁵⁵ [counting over⁵⁶] on his fingers the number of loaves⁵⁶ for every day, he said: "If⁵⁷ this chest were not in such a safe place,⁵⁸ I should say that

some loaves have been taken, but *from this day*⁵⁹ [on] I wish to close my door to suspicion by keeping⁶⁰ an exact account. I still have⁶¹ nine loaves and a piece." "Nine plagues⁶² may God send you," I answered silently.⁶³ And on hearing him say that, it seemed to me that he was piercing my heart with a *hunter's spear*,⁶⁴ and my stomach began to twinge,⁶⁵ feeling that it had returned to its former⁶⁶ diet.

He went out, while I, to console myself, opened the chest, and, seeing the loaves, I began to worship them, without daring to interfere⁶⁷ with them. I counted them to see if perchance the miser⁶⁸ had not been mistaken, and I found the account more correct than I wished⁶⁹ *it had been*.⁶⁸ All that I could do was *to kiss them a thousand times*⁷⁰ and to nibble⁷¹ as subtly as possible the broken⁷² bread at the very place⁷³ where it had been cut.⁷⁴ In⁷⁵ this way I spent that day [in] less cheerful [spirits] than the preceding one. But as my hunger was increasing, specially because during those two or three days my stomach had become accustomed to⁷⁶ more bread, I suffered the pangs of death,⁷⁷ and to such a degree that I did nothing⁷⁸ but open and close the chest to contemplate the face of God, as children⁷⁹ say. However, this God who helps the afflicted, seeing me in such a distress, suggested to my mind a little remedy. *I made this reflexion to myself*.⁸⁰ "This chest is old, large, and broken on⁸¹ many sides, and, although there are only small holes in it, one might think that rats, having entered⁸² it, have spoilt⁸³ those loaves. *It would not do*⁸⁵ to take one⁸⁴ right out, for he certainly⁸⁶ would discover the *wrong doing*,⁸⁷ he who constrains⁸⁸ me to live in such great sin. But this is permissible," said I, crumbling⁸⁹ the bread on a not very magnificent cloth⁹⁰ which happened⁹¹ to be there, taking from one loaf, leaving the next one⁹² [untouched], so that

out of three or four I got⁹³ three or four crumbs which I ate as one sucks a sugar plum,⁹⁴ and thus I somewhat strengthened⁹⁵ myself.

When my master came to dinner and opened the chest, he saw the damage, and thought, without doubt, that the rats had done it, for I had very exactly imitated what they generally do. He examined the chest from one end to the other, and he discovered some places⁹⁶ through which he suspected they had entered. He called me and said: "See, see, Lazarillo, [the⁹⁷] persecution [that] our bread suffered last⁹⁸ night." *I pretended to be very much surprised*,⁹⁹ asking him what it might be.¹⁰⁰ "What?"¹⁰¹ Rats, which devour everything." We began to eat and, thank God, I got something out of it,¹⁰² for this time a larger portion of bread fell to my share¹⁰³ than the *wretched piece*¹⁰⁴ which was usually set apart for me, the priest, having scraped¹⁰⁵ with a knife all the part¹⁰⁶ he thought had been gnawed,¹⁰⁷ gave it to me saying: "Eat this: a¹⁰⁸ rat is [a] clean beast."¹⁰⁹

From the French of Morel-Fatio.

118. The last word of Spanish criticism on 'Gil Blas'

While we *were gradually abandoning*¹ the rich vein² which Cervantes had opened, the French, *very much to their*³ satisfaction, *had been working*⁴ it, getting⁵ from it pure gold. Lesage, who is perhaps the greatest French novelist⁶ of the XVIIIth century, made for himself a regal mantle using⁷ patches from the capes of Espinel, Guevara, and Mateo Alemán. We would fain *have claimed Gil Blas as our own*,⁸ his features, his figure⁹ proclaimed his Castilian origin; but *whose fault is it?*¹⁰ if we have been so prodigal, so careless. *In vain do we allege*¹¹ that Gil Blas should have been born on¹² our side of the Pyrenees; the French answer that

*the*¹³ *cosiume*, *the externals*¹⁴ *only are Spanish in Gil Blas*,¹³ the character of the protagonist, versatile and mediocre, is essentially Gallic.¹⁵ And in this, *by heavens*,¹⁶ they are right. Our heroes are greater heroes, our rogues¹⁷ worse rogues than Gil Blas.

La Cuestión palpitante, Emilia Pardo Bazán.

118b. Selection from "Lesage romancier"

By Léo Claretie

*It was in the time*¹⁸ of La Bruyère and Lesage that people began to realize¹⁹ that the mere²⁰ description of external objects, a costume, a street corner, a shop may have its charm.

But you²¹ feel that something is yet lacking²² in this youthful²³ art, and *that is*²⁴ the sentiment of nature as *it is understood*²⁵ later [by] Jean-Jacques and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. In the novel of that time *there are no landscapes*,²⁶ and [by this we mean] not only descriptions [of the country²⁷], but also what is²¹ called picturesque views *in cities*.²⁸ Montaigne *expressed a regret*²⁹ that the falls³⁰ of Schaffhausen *were a hindrance to*³¹ navigation. Since his time, novelists have not *improved very much*.³² Suppose³³ don Chérubin or des Grieux should go³⁴ to America; their *diary on ship-board*³⁶ will be *incomplete enough in the line of impressions*.³⁵ We *have reached*³⁷ an interesting³⁸ transition period.³⁹ The characters⁴⁰ *become animated*,⁴¹ *while the background still preserves a grayish tint*.⁴²

See⁴³ Gil Blas. All these people are really⁴⁴ living: they walk, they sleep, they think, they eat, they travel *on* a⁴⁵ mule, or *in* a⁴⁵ carriage, or *on*⁴⁶ foot, and they dress too. They eat "as if they had been starved,"⁴⁷ and drink "in proportion". [In] the morning, [wrapped] in [their] dressing

gowns,⁴⁸ they drink⁴⁹ chocolate; these repasts detain⁵⁰ the writer who condescends⁵¹ to describe them, and [such pages] are⁵² not *among the least interesting*.⁵³

Is there anything more amusing than the gobbling⁵⁴ of gouty [old] Sedillo?

*The bill of fare*⁵⁵ is not always so complete; there are meals *at all prices*,⁵⁶ [and] *even some which are very modest*,⁵⁷ like those of the Cuença hermit: a few green onions with a piece of bread and a pitcher⁵⁸ of water and, [on] days of *grand celebration*,⁵⁹ a little cheese and two handfuls⁶⁰ of hazelnuts.

*It looks as if*⁶¹ Lesage *were taking pleasure in making the most*⁶² of gastronomy, in order to introduce life *into his novel*,⁶³ a life of plenty⁶⁴ and *more than plenty*,⁶⁵ [as is enjoyed by people⁶⁶] with⁴⁶ [a] good digestion⁶⁷ [and⁴⁶] pink complexion, *who have*⁴⁶ regular⁶⁸ teeth and a⁴⁶ wide⁶⁹ mouth, and who look as if they might say: "I eat, therefore⁷⁰ I am."

Lesage not only gives to his characters⁷² a⁷¹ vegetative life, he gives to each one a⁷³ characteristic physiognomy, a⁷³ striking attitude, a⁷³ gait⁷⁴ [of his own]. Here is a sketch⁷⁵ in two strokes of [the] pencil. Gil Blas, *having donned*⁷⁶ his master's suit,⁷⁷ is in quest of a *love affair*.⁷⁸ He *transacts some business*⁷⁹ with an old woman *who keeps a lodging house*⁸⁰ [and] who takes him for a *young nobleman*.⁸¹ "You are not mistaken, my dear,"⁸² said I, *putting forward*⁸³ my⁷¹ right leg and bending over the left hip; "I may say without vanity that I belong to one of the greatest houses in⁷ Spain."

Lesage *not only*⁸⁴ feeds them, dresses them, shows them in a characteristic attitude, he also gives them lodgings⁸⁵ *in keeping with their means*.⁸⁶ Let us enter by the trap-door into the brigands' home;⁸⁷ here is the stable lighted by two large iron lamps (which) hang⁸⁸ from the vault.

Do you want something better? Lirias Castle is, of course,⁸⁹ more comfortable. . . .

If you wish a more original *abiding place*,⁹⁰ let us go to Fabrice's.

Lesage romancier, par Léo Claretie (Librairie Armand Colin, Paris).

Comme Molière Lesage nous montre des types plutôt que des portraits.

119. Qui est la marquise de Chaves?

The *précieux* and *précieuses* had already been introduced¹ in Gil Blas, but *they were quickly disposed of*.² We are at the marquise de Chaves'. Being³ master of ceremonies, Gil Blas opens wide⁴ for us the doors of the parlor. The mistress of the house is introduced⁵ to us: "she is a distinguished woman with an *instinctive directness*⁶ in spite of her philosophy; [she is] reasonable, [and] without any taste for gambling⁷ or *love affairs*,"⁸ caring⁹ only for conversation [and] leading a life "which would seem very tiresome to most ladies." Gil Blas *knows only one thing against her*.¹⁰ One morning, while she was in¹¹ her dressing room,¹² a small man came, *very untidy*,¹³ *with a homely face*.¹⁴ He is introduced, [he]¹⁵ remains [for] an hour tête à tête¹⁶ with the marquise. On¹⁷ successive days [afterward], he returned, and was introduced by a secret¹⁸ stairway into the room of [the lady of the house¹⁹]. The suspicions of the servants *were altogether wrong*,²⁰ they⁵ thought²¹ [their] mistress¹⁹ (had) peculiar²¹ *taste in love*,²² there was no love;²² the little humpback dabbled²³ [in] magic. *enabled you to see the future in a glass*,²⁴ showed how to turn the sieve,²⁵ and the marquise, in spite of her learning,²⁶ *allowed herself to take stock in the performance*²⁷ of a quack. *On the whole*,²⁸ she was a woman of great merit,

and *many people*²⁹ of quality and *literary men*³⁰ shared³¹ in *building up her reputation*,³² and her house, *more than any other*,³³ was "le bureau des ouvrages d'esprit".

Gil Blas is at his post *in the hall*.³⁴ In the parlor everything is ready for the reception, the chairs *are in their places*,³⁵ the footstools³⁶ for the women *are ready*.³⁷ He, standing by³⁸ the door, calls³⁹ [the names] and introduces the ladies and gentlemen: the noisy⁴⁰ Campanario, a handsome gentleman⁴¹ *with a*⁴¹ Greek face, a tall thin⁴² [man], Margarita de Montalvan, a *featherbrained young man*,⁴³ who is [the] son of a nobleman,⁴⁴ Angela de Peñafiel, and *some others beside*.⁴⁵

*At whose house*⁴⁶ are we? Who is this marquise? Many names *have been coupled*⁴⁷ *with that of Chaves*⁴⁸ which is the name of a *watering place*⁴⁹ in⁵⁰ Portugal. The keys give the duchess of Bouillon, but without any proof. *On the other hand, we have some proofs*⁵¹ *to show that she is not the person*.⁵² The only reason *for mentioning her name*⁵³ is the anecdote told by Collé, [of] the pride shown [by] Lesage in her drawing-room where he refused to read "Turcaret," because *he had not been treated with proper consideration*.⁵⁴ [This shows] that⁵⁵ her guests are⁵⁴ interested in plays, for when Lesage leaves, servants are sent running after him to bring him back. On the contrary, at the marquise de Chaves', comedy is⁵⁴ considered⁵⁶ as a weak production which does not deserve any praise.

At that time *there were a number of*⁵⁸ *salons, among them some of the most noted*.⁵⁷ Marmontel, d'Argenson, President Hénault, Richelieu, Grimm, Laharpe *draw our attention to a large number of them*,⁵⁹ so that our⁶¹ only difficulty is *that of making a choice*.⁶⁰

The part⁶² of Gil Blas *in which*⁶³ the marquise is mentioned⁶⁴ was published in 1715. Here is a date which *limits the field of our investigation*.⁶⁵ *The marquise de Chaves can-*

not possibly be Mlle de Lespinasse,⁶⁶ since she was born only in 1732, neither M^{me} Geoffrin who was sixteen years old, neither M^{me} du Deffand *who was*⁶⁷ eighteen. M^{me} d'Epinay was not [yet] born.

We have not yet named the two most *prominent*⁶⁸ salons of the time, that of M^{me} de Tencin and that of Marquise de Lambert. The marquise de Chaves is not M^{me} de Tencin. *Such an identification*⁷⁰ *would meet with*⁶⁹ an insuperable⁷¹ difficulty, [as] it would be impossible to recognize in this marquise, "who is extremely reasonable" and who has not even any passion, who is without any taste either for gambling⁷ or for *love affairs*,⁸ the former⁷² mistress of Cardinal Dubois, of Duke Richelieu, of Councilor La Fresnaye, she who *had the impudence to raise*⁷³ 'galanterie' to the height of her ambition, which⁷⁴ was raising⁷⁵ it [to a] very high [plane].

Is the marquise then M^{me} de Lambert? Many keys give her⁷⁶ as being the original of marquise de Chaves. *As a matter of fact*,⁷⁷ they have (a good) many traits [in] common. Both are widows and marquises; Marquise de Chaves tall and beautiful, *has a fine figure*.⁷⁸ M^{me} de Lambert could stand⁷⁹ the comparison. Marivaux in "The Life of Marianne", *is supposed to have*⁸⁰ drawn⁸¹ her portrait under the name of M^{me} de Miran, of whom he says: "You *would not have noticed*⁸² that she was a *fine looking woman*,⁸³ but only that she was the kindest woman in⁵⁰ the world." Both of them are wealthy; M^{me} de Chaves "*had an*⁸⁴ income of ten thousand ducats." The marquise, *on her father's side*,⁸⁵ was heir to⁵⁰ [a] large property.⁸⁶ Her mansion on¹¹ the corner of the present⁸⁷ Colbert and Richelieu streets was luxurious. The reputation of her celebrated Tuesdays *is in no way inferior to*⁸⁸ the receptions of the other [lady]. She too is wise, reasonable, Marivaux *praises her*⁸⁹ when

he speaks of the moral virtues of M^{me} de Miran. Fontenelle assures us⁹⁰ that there was not⁵⁴ a gambling table [to be seen] in her house. She too "has not any taste⁹¹ for gambling." Like M^{me} de Chaves, she receives both literary people like Fontenelle and La Motte and members of the nobility, for instance, M. de Valincour. Well, then! isn't it evident that Lesage intended to picture M^{me} de Lambert? Are not the two characters⁹² alike? Not so much [alike] as you might think. They even show⁹³ some marked⁹⁴ differences. First, Marquise de Chaves is thirty-five years [old]; M^{me} de Lambert, in 1715, is sixty-eight years [old]. But let us admit⁹⁵ that Lesage, *in neglecting to give the correct dates, wished*⁹⁶ simply to mislead⁹⁷ those who would try to make comparisons. Can M^{me} de Chaves possibly be M^{me} de Lambert, she of whom Lesage says: "She had no children?" The marquise, without her two children, would be, to use the language in vogue in her salon, the elm tree *robbed of its leafy branches*.⁹⁸ Those two beings whom she loved and counseled with so much tenderness and elevation [of feeling] *seem to be part*⁹⁹ of herself. Her gentle face has *come down*¹⁰⁰ to us framed [as it were] between the young and smiling faces of her son and her daughter for whom she was writing her precious "Counsels".¹⁰¹

The people who used to gather in ¹⁰² her drawing room we know, but nowhere do we find¹⁰³ that Lesage even penetrated⁹⁶ into this jealously guarded circle, or that he knew⁹⁶ it well enough to describe it so faithfully. The little hunchback who came secretly to M^{me} de Chaves' has not his counterpart¹⁰⁴ at M^{me} de Lambert's; people⁵ would have talked about [the affair]; it would have been known if Lesage himself had *been informed of it*¹⁰⁶ and thought he could interest his readers by alluding to *this bit of gossip*.¹⁰⁷ Was M^{me} de

Lambert superstitious? That is very possible, although Marivaux has⁹⁶ pictured M^{me} de Miran as a person *without much religious faith*.¹⁰⁸ It is more likely that Lesage wished to indicate¹⁰⁹ in¹¹⁰ his "précieuse" a trait [which was] common to many women *of the time*.¹¹¹ They were very superstitious. When La Fosse showed the devil to whoever wished to see him, in the Montmartre quarries, the marquises de l'Hospital and de la Force went. It is true they were sorry. In the dark,¹¹² they were relieved¹¹³ of their jewels. The police had to interfere.¹¹⁴ Princess Conti had promised abbé Leroux a coach and liveries, provided he would find⁹⁶ for her the *philosopher's*¹¹⁵ stone. Duchess de Ruffec had *gone into some transaction*¹¹⁶ with witches who were to *make her young again*.¹¹⁷ Mlle de Lespinasse prevented M. de Guibert from renting an apartment [on] a Friday. M^{me} de Pompadour *went stealthily*¹¹⁸ [at] night to look at coffee grounds¹¹⁹ at the Bontemps. At M^{me} de Séry's, at Princess Conti's *performances were held*¹²⁰ *of which the attraction was witchcraft*¹²¹ and evocations [of spirits]; the miracles of deacon Paris were also commented⁵ upon. The age¹²² was getting ready for¹¹ Mesmer and Cagliostro.

Translated from *Lesage romancier*, par Léo Claretie. — Armand Colin, Paris.

120 Gil Blas devient gouverneur de don Henri

Au dix-huitième siècle, il n'était pas impossible à un valet bien doué de jeter bas la livrée pour devenir secrétaire ou précepteur. Les valets de Voltaire ont plus d'une fois subi semblable métamorphose; l'exemple de Rousseau n'est pas une exception. Il semble donc que, lorsque Lesage nous montre Gil Blas remplissant successivement ces différents emplois, il ne fait que se conformer à la réalité. Dans le

passage où Gil Blas, devenu gouverneur de don Henri, choisit pour son élève un maître de danse, il a, avec Martin Ligero, une conversation dont le relief rappelle Molière dans «Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.»

* * *

Le duc d'Olivarès reconnaît le fils de la Génoise par acte authentique — et le nomme don Henri Philippe de Guzman.

“Don Henry,” said my Lord,¹ addressing² him while pointing³ to me, “this gentleman⁴ you see here is the guide I have chosen to lead you into society;⁵ I have entire confidence in him, and I give him absolute control⁶ over you. Yes, Santillane,” he added addressing² me, “I leave him entirely to your care,⁷ and I have no doubt but you will account for him all right.”⁸ To this speech the minister added a few other remarks, exhorting⁹ the young man to conform to my wishes. After this¹⁰ I took¹¹ Don Henry to his private mansion.¹² As soon as we reached the place,¹³ I had him muster¹⁴ all his servants, and I told him the occupation held¹⁵ by each one in his household.¹⁶ He did not seem to be bewildered¹⁷ by his change of position, and, receiving graciously¹⁸ the respectful¹⁹ and deferential¹⁹ attentions²⁰ they showed²¹ him, he seemed to have been all his life²² what he had become by mere chance.²³ He was not lacking in²⁴ wit, but his ignorance was crass,²⁵ he hardly could read and write. I gave him²⁶ a tutor²⁷ who was to teach him the rudiments²⁸ of Latin, and I engaged²⁹ a teacher of geography, a teacher of history, [and]³⁰ a teacher of fencing.³¹ You³² may fancy³³ that I took good care³⁴ not to forget a dancing master; [the] only difficulty I encountered was that of choosing one,³⁵ at³⁶ that time there were a great many celebrated³⁸ [dancing masters]³⁷ in Madrid, and I did not know to which one I

ought to give the preference. While I was in this quandary,³⁹ I saw entering the yard of our mansion a man richly dressed. They told me he wished⁴⁰ to speak to me. I went to meet⁴¹ him, fancying⁴² that he was at least a knight of Saint-James or of Alcantara. I asked him what I could do for him.⁴³ "My Lord," said he, after having made several bows⁴⁴ which *showed that he was a professional*,⁴⁵ "as they told me it is your Lordship⁴⁶ who chooses the masters of Don Henry, I came to offer my services; my name⁴⁷ is Martin Ligeró, and, thank God, I have some reputation. I am not [in] the habit of going begging for pupils; that is suitable only for second-rate⁴⁸ dancing masters. I generally wait for people³² to *seek me out*,⁴⁹ but, as I am the teacher of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, of Don Louis de Haró and a few other noblemen of the house of Guzman, *a house to which I am*,⁵⁰ so to speak, the born servant, *I consider it my duty*⁵¹ to forestall⁵² you." "I see from your speech," I answered, "that you are the man we want."⁵³ How much do you ask⁵⁴ a⁵⁵ month?" "Four doubloons," he answered, "it is the usual⁵⁶ price, and I give only two lessons a⁵⁵ week." "Four doubloons a⁵⁵ month," I exclaimed, "that is a good deal." "*What do you mean by a good deal*,"⁵⁷ he replied with⁵⁸ an astonished look, "you would not hesitate to give a pistol a month to a master of philosophy!" There was *no gainsaying such an amusing reply*,⁵⁹ I laughed heartily⁶⁰ and I asked the Señor Ligeró if he really thought that a man of his calling⁶¹ was⁶² preferable to a master of philosophy. "*There is no*⁶³ doubt [of it]," said he, "we are of greater use in the world than these gentlemen. What are men before they have passed through our hands? Bodies [who seem to be] all of one piece, *unlicked cubs*,⁶⁴ but our lessons develop them little by little, and gradually make⁶⁵ them take

form;⁶⁶ in short,⁶⁷ we teach them *to move about*⁶⁸ gracefully, we teach⁶⁹ them attitudes and also airs of nobility⁷⁰ and dignity."⁷⁰ I *yielded to the reasoning*⁷¹ of this dancing master, and I engaged⁷² him to teach Don Henry at [a rate of] four doubloons a month, since⁷³ it was a *settled price*⁷⁴ among the masters of the art.

121. Comment Gil Blas fut fait noble malgré lui

Au début de sa carrière, Gil Blas a honte de son humble origine; il dit volontiers, pour donner le change, que ses parents sont de petite bourgeoisie. Mais une fois arrivé, il a la fierté du parvenu qui n'hésite pas à dire franchement d'où il est parti; il refuse d'abord les lettres de noblesse que lui offre le duc d'Olivarès et quand, finalement, il les accepte, c'est avec l'intention de ne pas s'en servir; il sent que ce serait se donner un ridicule. Il fait encore moins de cas de son titre de noblesse que Beaumarchais n'en faisait du sien, lorsqu'il répondait à un gentilhomme qui lui avait posé une question impertinente, que: «son titre en valait bien un autre, puisqu'il en avait la quittance dans sa poche.»

A few days before the marriage of Don Henry, my Lord having *sent for me*¹ said, placing in my hands² some papers: "Here,³ Gil Blas, *is a new present I have for you.*⁴ I trust⁵ it will not be [a] disagreeable⁶ [one]; here are some *letters patent*⁷ *prepared for you, according to the orders I gave,*⁸ [and conferring upon you nobility]." "My Lord," I answered, rather⁹ surprised by these words, "your Excellency knows that I am the son of a duenna and of a squire;¹⁰ *it seems to me*¹² it¹¹ would be [a] profanation¹³ [of] nobility *to include*

me in it;¹⁴ and¹⁵ of all the graces His Majesty may bestow¹⁶ [upon] me, [it is] the one I least deserve and least yearn for." "Your birth," answered the minister, "is an obstacle [which can be] easily removed.¹⁷ You have been *at work upon*¹⁸ state matters¹⁹ under the ministry of Duke de Lermé and under mine; besides," he added with a smile, "didn't you render the Monarch some services which deserve a reward? In a word, Santillane, you are not unworthy of the honour I wish to bestow upon you; moreover,²⁰ and this reason *is not to be contested*,²¹ the position²² you hold²³ with²⁴ my son *makes it necessary*²⁵ that you should belong²⁶ to the nobility; I may *just as well*²⁸ admit²⁷ that it is on this account that I have granted you letters patent."⁷ "I have nothing to say, my Lord," I answered, "since²⁹ your Excellency demands³⁰ it." After saying these words I left, *taking along with me*³¹ my letters patent which I put in my pocket.

"Then³² I am now a nobleman," said I to³³ myself when I reached³⁴ the street, "I am now a nobleman without *being*²⁶ *indebted for it to*³⁵ my parents; I may, whenever *I feel like it*,³⁶ have myself called Don Gil Blas; and if any one of my acquaintances *thinks he may*³⁷ *laugh in my face*³⁸ while giving me this title, I shall have my letters shown him.³⁹ But let us look [at] them," said I, while drawing them from my pocket, "let us see *how*⁴⁰ *a plebeian can be turned into a nobleman*;"⁴¹ therefore I ran over my letters patent which *practically read as follows*:⁴² The king, in order to recognize the zeal I had shown on³³ more than one occasion for his service and for the weal⁴³ of the state, had *thought it was proper*⁴⁴ to gratify me with letter patent. *I make bold to say*,⁴⁵ to my credit,⁴⁶ that they did not inspire me with any pride. Having always [present] before my [mind's] eye the

lowness of my origin, this honour humiliated me instead of making me proud; therefore I resolved⁴⁷ to lock⁴⁸ up my letters patent in a drawer, without *taking any pride in the ownership*⁴⁹ of them.

122. A propos du "Neveu de Rameau" par Diderot

C'est d'après nature que Diderot a dessiné ce portrait d'un pauvre hère qui ne parvient pas à sortir de la bourbe. Il a sa place ici: ne fait-il pas pendant à Gil Blas qui, lui, est l'arriviste heureux? Comme trop souvent Diderot, après avoir écrit un ouvrage, ne s'en inquiétait plus, il arriva que «Le Neveu de Rameau» fut publié d'abord en allemand.

123a. Schiller to Koerner

April 25, 1805.

Goethe has been *quite ill*¹ . . . however he has not remained idle² this winter; he has translated a manuscript by Diderot *which, by a stroke of good luck*,³ *fell into*⁴ our hands, and he has *written for it some*⁵ notes.⁶ The book will be published at⁷ Goeschen's, under *the name*⁸ "Rameau's Nephew;" I shall send it to you as soon as it is published.⁹ [The subject] is¹⁰ an imaginary conversation between the musician's nephew and Diderot. This nephew is the ideal [type] of [a]¹¹ vagrant¹² parasite, but among people of this stamp¹³ he is a hero, and while¹⁴ he pictures himself, he satirizes¹⁵ the society and the world [in which]¹⁶ he lives. Diderot *availed himself of this opportunity*¹⁷ for exposing¹⁸ the enemies of the Encyclopædists, specially¹⁹ Palissot, and *he avenges*²⁰ all the good writers of his time for the attacks *directed at them*²¹ [by] the rabble²² of *critics from the gutter*.²³ Besides, *he expresses his*

*personal opinion*²⁴ on the great quarrel between musicians which divided the society of his time, and on this subject he says some excellent things. SCHILLER.

123b. Fragment from a letter from Goethe

This remarkable book must be considered as one of Diderot's masterpieces. His contemporaries, his friends even *took him to task because*,²⁵ *although he was able to write*²⁶ beautiful pages, *he could not write*²⁷ a beautiful book. *Such comments*²⁸ are repeated,²⁹ they leave a durable impression, and thus, *the case not being more closely examined*,³⁰ the reputation³² of an eminent man *is impaired*.³¹ "Rameau's Nephew" is a new instance³³ of the art with which Diderot knew how to blend³⁴ into a harmonious whole³⁴ the most heterogeneous details taken from life.³⁵ Whatever³⁶ opinion³⁷ people held³³ of the writer, friends and enemies agreed³⁹ that in conversation no one could surpass him, *as far as*⁴⁰ vivacity, energy, wit, variety, and grace [were concerned]; now⁴¹ "Rameau's Nephew" is a conversation; that is why the author, having chosen the form in which he excelled, has produced a masterpiece which the reader admires more and more as⁴² he comes to know it better. GOETHE.

Lettres citées dans Diderot. *Belles Lettres*, vol. II, p. 375.

124. Selection from the "Neveu de Rameau"

Translated by John Morley

He. — Let your daughter have¹ masters. *I.* — Not yet; it is her mother who *looks to*² her education, for *one must*³ have peace *in one's house*.⁴ *He.* — Peace in one's house? You⁵ have only *that*,⁶ when you are either master or servant,⁷ and it should be master. . . . How old is your child? *I.* —

*That has nothing to do with the matter.*⁸ *He.* — How old is your child, [I say]? *I.* — *The devil take you,*⁹ *leave my child and her age alone,*¹⁰ and return to the master she *is to have.*¹¹ *He.* — *I know nothing so pig-headed as*¹² *a philosopher. In all humility and supplication,*¹³ might one not know from his highness¹⁴ the philosopher, about what age (her) ladyship,¹⁵ his daughter, may be? *I.* — [I] suppose she is¹⁶ eight. *He.* — Eight! Then four years ago she ought to have had her fingers on the keys.¹⁷ *I.* — But perhaps I have no fancy¹⁸ for including,¹⁹ in the scheme²⁰ of her education, a study that takes so much time and *is good*²¹ [for] so little. *He.* — And what will you teach her, if you please? *I.* — To reason justly, if I can; [a] thing so uncommon²² among²³ men, and more uncommon²⁴ still among²³ women. *He.* — Oh,²⁵ *let her reason as ill as she chooses,*²⁶ if she is only pretty, amusing, and coquettish. *I.* — As nature has been unkind²⁷ enough to give her a delicate organization with a *very sensitive soul,*²⁸ and to expose her to the same troubles²⁹ in life as if she had a strong organization and a heart of bronze, I will teach her, if I can, to bear them courageously. *He.* — Let her weep and *give herself airs,*³⁰ and have *nerves all on edge*³¹ like the rest, if only she is pretty, amusing, and coquettish. What, *is she to learn no dancing nor deportment?*³² *I.* — (Yes) *just enough*³³ to make a curtsy,³⁴ to have a good carriage,³⁵ *to enter a room gracefully,*³⁶ and to know [how] to walk. *He.* — No singing? *I.* — Just enough³³ to pronounce her words well. *He.* — No music? *I.* — If there were a good teacher of harmony, I would gladly entrust³⁷ her to him two hours a³⁸ day for³⁹ two or three years, *not any more.*⁴⁰ *He.* — And instead of the essential things that you [are going to] suppress? . . . *I.* — I place grammar, fables, history, geography, a little drawing, and a great deal of morality.⁴¹ *He.*

— *How easy it would be for me*⁴² to prove to you the uselessness of all such knowledge⁴³ in a world like ours! Uselessness, do I say? Perhaps even the danger! But *I will for the moment ask you a single question*:⁴⁴ will she not require³ one or two masters? *I.* — No doubt. *He.* — And⁴⁵ you hope that these masters will know the grammar, the fables, the history, the geography, the morality,⁴¹ in which they will give her lessons? Moonshine,⁴⁶ my dear mentor, [sheer] moonshine! If they knew⁴⁷ these things [well] enough to teach them [to other people], they would never teach them. *I.* — And why? *He.* — Because they would have spent [all] their lives⁴⁸ in studying them. It is necessary³ to be profound in art and science, to know⁴⁷ its⁴⁹ elements thoroughly. Classical books can only be well done by those who have *grown grey in harness*;⁵⁰ it is the middle and the end which *light up*⁵¹ the darkness of the beginning. Ask your friend d'Alembert, the coryphæus of mathematics, if he thinks himself too good to *write about the elements*.⁵² *It was not till*⁵³ after thirty or forty years of practice,⁵⁴ that my uncle got a *glimpse of the profundities and the first rays*⁵⁵ [of light] in musical theory. *I.* — O madman,⁵⁶ arch madman, I cried, how comes⁵⁷ it that in thine evil head such just ideas go⁵⁸ pell-mell with [such a mass]⁵⁹ of extravagances? *He.* — Who [on earth] *can find that out*?⁶⁰ 'Tis chance that flings⁶¹ them to you, and they remain. If you⁵ do not know the whole [of a thing], you⁵ know *none of it well*,⁶² you⁵ [do not know]⁶³ *whither one thing leads*⁶⁴ nor whence another has come, where this and that *should be*⁶⁵ placed, which⁶⁶ ought to pass the first, and where the second would be best. Can you teach well without method? And method, whence comes that? . . . In truth, one might [every whit]⁶⁷ as well be ignorant, as⁶⁷ know so little and

know it so ill; and that was exactly *my doctrine*⁶³ when I gave myself out for a music-master. What are you musing⁶⁹ over? *I.* — I am thinking that all you have told me is more specious than solid. But that is no matter. You taught, you say, accompaniment and composition. *He.* — Yes. *I.* — And you knew nothing about either. *He.* — No, i' faith; and that is why there were worse than I was, namely those who fancied they knew something. At any rate, I did not spoil either the child's taste or its hands. When they passed from me to a good master, if they had learnt nothing, at all events they had nothing to unlearn, and that was always so much time and so much money⁷⁰ saved.

John Morley's *Diderot*, vol. II, p. 307-309.

125. Richardson est plus optimiste que Marivaux

Marianne, à la mort de sa protectrice, se trouve à Paris sans ressources. Un religieux la recommande à un homme d'un certain âge assez connu par ses bonnes œuvres; mais cet homme de bien se trouve être un hypocrite qui, sous le manteau de la charité, en fait pis que pendre. C'est grâce à lui que Marianne est entrée, en qualité d'apprentie, chez une lingère. Cependant, le bon apôtre ayant jeté le masque, Marianne se voit obligée de lui renvoyer ses présents; lui, alors, refuse de payer l'apprentissage de la jeune fille. Le dimanche précédent, Marianne, au retour de l'église, s'était foulé le pied et Valville, un jeune gentilhomme, croyant que ses chevaux avaient causé l'accident, avait fait monter la jeune fille chez sa mère pour qu'elle se remit un peu. Rentrée chez la lingère, Marianne avait reçu la visite de son bienfaiteur et, un peu plus tard, Valville étant

venu prendre des nouvelles, était arrivé juste à point pour voir M. de Climal en train de faire la cour à la jeune fille, qui n'avait pas encore trouvé moyen de l'éconduire. Valville s'était retiré dédaigneusement avant que Marianne eût pu le désabuser.

Ce jeune homme, dont la mère deviendra la protectrice de Marianne, se trouve être le neveu du vieil hypocrite.

Dans le roman de Richardson, Paméla, dont les aventures ne sont pas sans analogie avec celles de Marianne, est d'abord en butte aux entreprises d'un grand seigneur mauvais sujet qui, plus tard, fait volte-face et devient un excellent mari. Marivaux, qui connaissait le monde dans lequel il vivait, n'a pas cru que le même personnage pût jouer deux rôles aussi opposés, ni qu'un jeune homme pût être parfait. Son hypocrite se convertit, mais à la onzième heure seulement, lorsqu'il n'a plus aucun espoir de guérison; et Valville, qui devient le fiancé de Marianne, est assez volage pour s'éprendre, pendant une maladie de sa fiancée, d'une jeune Anglaise qu'il voit au couvent. Marianne, une fois remise, comprend ce qui se passe; elle veut rompre; mais, lors de l'entrevue qu'elle a avec Valville, elle le traite avec une si gracieuse indifférence qu'il en est tout étourdi et ne sait vraiment plus ce qu'il se veut. Cette scène-là est de M^{me} Riccoboni; mais on sait que Marivaux l'approuvait. Découragé, il n'avait pas terminé son livre; il avait voulu montrer comment une jeune fille peut arriver au bonheur et il avait trouvé la tâche trop difficile. On ne sait si Marianne épouse le volage Valville qui l'a aimée à première vue pour l'oublier ensuite tout aussi facilement, ou bien cet homme d'âge mûr qui, sur ce qu'on lui a dit du caractère de Marianne, se propose de l'épouser avant même de l'avoir vue. Ce que Marivaux semble vouloir faire entendre, c'est que,

dans le monde où il vivait la coquetterie était une précieuse ressource, le seul moyen peut-être de retenir les Valvilles. Quoi qu'il en soit, Marianne reste dans le monde puisque, lorsqu'elle écrit le récit de sa vie, elle est devenue comtesse.

126. Selection from "La Vie de Marianne"

Par Marivaux

Thereupon¹ I opened my box² to take out³ first the recently⁵ bought linen.⁴ "Yes, M. de Valville, yes," I said to myself, while taking out⁷ [the clothes], "*you will see what kind of [a] girl I am*⁸ and *what an opinion of me*⁹ you should hold,"¹⁰ and this made me hasten; so that, without meaning it, I thought more about him than about his uncle to whom I was returning¹¹ everything,¹² and I was more inclined to think about him because¹³ the returning¹⁴ of the linen, the dress, and the money, [and] along with them a little note¹⁵ which I intended to write, would not fail to make the matter clear to¹⁶ Valville and make him feel sorry for¹⁷ my loss. It seemed to me he had¹⁸ a¹⁹ generous soul, and, in²¹ advance I was gloating²⁰ over the grief he would feel²² at the idea of having offended so respectable a girl: for I had a dim idea of the many reasons²³ [I had] to be respected.

First, I had my misfortune,²⁴ which was unique; in addition to²⁵ this misfortune I had some virtue, and they went so well together! and then [besides] I was young, and then I was beautiful; *what else could you wish?*²⁶

If I could have made myself touching on purpose,²⁷ in order to make a generous lover sigh for²¹ having ill-treated me, I could not have succeeded better; and, provided I made

Valville feel grieved,²⁸ I was satisfied; after that²⁹ I *cared not if I never heard any more about*³⁰ him.

My little scheme³¹ was *never in my life to set my eyes on*³² him; and that³³ too I found grand and generous *on my part*,³⁴ for I loved him and I was glad to love him because he had noticed³⁵ my love, and³⁶ if he saw that in spite of that *I was bound to break*³⁷ with him, he would understand better *what kind of a girl*³⁸ he had to deal with.³⁹

Meanwhile *I was getting on with my packing*,⁴⁰ and what will amuse⁴¹ you is that, *while I was entertaining such lofty and courageous ideas*,⁴² I did not refrain,⁴³ *while working*,⁴⁴ to look⁴³ [at] the linen, while folding it, and I said to myself, but so low that I could hardly hear it: "And yet, it had been well-chosen" which meant: "It is a pity⁴⁵ to leave it."

[A] small regret, which slightly lowered *my proud feeling of spite*,⁴⁶ but *how could I help it?*⁴⁷ I would have adorned⁴⁷ myself with the linen I was returning,⁴⁸ and grand deeds are difficult; whatever be the pleasure you⁴⁸ take⁴⁸ in them, you⁴⁸ would *willingly dispense with doing*⁴⁹ them: *it would be pleasanter*⁵⁰ *to leave them undone*,⁵¹ *let this be said jokingly*⁵² *in regard to myself*,⁵³ but, in general, *we have to brace ourselves*⁵⁴ to be great; *we only have to*⁵⁵ remain as we⁴⁸ are to be small. Let us return⁵⁶ to the subject. *There remained only*⁵⁷ my cap⁵⁸ to fold, and, *as when*⁵⁹ I entered⁶⁰ my room I had placed it on a chair by the door, I was forgetting it; a girl of my age who is on the point of losing her *fine clothes*⁶¹ may [well] have [a moment] of absent-mindedness.⁶²

I was thinking⁶³ only about my dress, which *had to be packed*⁶⁴ too; I mean the one M. de Climal had given me; and as *I was wearing it*,⁶⁵ and was evidently postponing⁶⁶ taking it off: "*Is there anything left to be packed?*"⁶⁷ said I, "Is that all? No, there is still another thing, the money,"

and this money I *took out*⁶⁸ without any difficulty. I was not [a] miser, I was only vain; and this is why my¹⁹ courage failed⁶⁹ only in⁷⁰ respect to the dress.

At last, however, *the dress was the only thing left*,⁷¹ "how shall I pack it? Now,⁷² before taking off this dress, I *must first take down*⁷³ the other [one]," I added, probably to gain time,⁷⁴ and when I said the other, it was the old [one] I meant,⁷⁵ and I could see it *hanging from*⁷⁶ the tapestry.

I therefore⁷⁷ went to take it [down] and, *while I was walking towards it, and it was only*⁷⁸ two steps [I had to take], this proud⁷⁹ heart softened,⁸⁰ my eyes swam,⁸¹ I don't know how it happened, but I sighed⁸² deeply, *either over*⁸³ myself, or over Valville, or over the beautiful dress; I don't know which of the three. *What I did was*⁸⁴ *to take the old dress from its peg*⁸⁵ and, sighing again, I dropped sadly on a chair saying: "How unhappy I am!

O! Lord,⁸⁶ why did you *take away from me*⁸⁷ my father and my mother!"

Perhaps *that was not*⁸⁸ exactly what I meant,⁸⁹ and I only mentioned⁹⁰ my parents in order to give to my affliction a more worthy subject; for sometimes you⁴⁸ are proud⁹¹ with yourself, you⁴⁸ do *cowardly things*,⁹² which you⁴⁸ are not willing to admit, and which you⁴⁸ disguise⁹³ [under other names]; thus perhaps I was only weeping on account of my clothes.

However this may be,⁹⁴ after this short monologue which, *in spite of myself*,⁹⁵ would have *driven me to undress*,⁹⁶ I *chanced to glance at*⁹⁷ my cap which was beside of me. "Well!"⁹⁸ said I then, "I thought I had put everything in the bundle and *now here is the cap again*;⁹⁹ I do not even think⁶³ of taking⁷ one out of my box² to cover my head,¹⁰⁰ and I am bare-headed;¹⁰¹ *what a bother*¹⁰² all this [is]!" And then, going¹⁰³ gradually¹⁰⁴ from one idea to another, [I] *was*

*reminded of*¹⁰⁶ my friar.¹⁰⁵ "Alas! poor man!" I said to myself, "he will be very much surprised *on hearing*¹⁰⁷ all that." And right away I remembered that I ought to call on him; *that no time was to*¹⁰⁸ be lost; that *it was the first thing*¹⁰⁹ [to do] on account of my position;¹¹⁰ that I could [perfectly] well send the package to-morrow. "Indeed! I am *foolish enough*¹¹¹ to be bothering¹¹² so much about these old¹¹³ clothes, (I said *old* to make me believe I did not like them). *The best thing is*¹¹⁴ to send them to-morrow morning; then Valville will be *at home*;¹¹⁵ it is not at all likely that he will²⁸ be in now; I must leave¹¹⁷ the package for the present; I shall finish it later, after¹¹⁸ I return from¹¹⁹ the friar's; my foot hardly hurts¹²⁰ at all [now]; [I dare say] by going slowly *I shall be able to reach*¹²¹ his convent.

Yes, but which cap am I going to wear?"¹²² Which cap; well! the one I had taken⁸⁷ off and which was beside me. *Why should I take the trouble of*¹²³ rummaging¹²⁴ in my box in order to find another, since this one was all ready?

And besides, as it was much more expensive¹²⁵ than mine, *it was just the thing*¹²⁶ to wear,⁶ in order to show it to the friar,¹⁰⁵ who might infer¹²⁷ on seeing it that he¹²⁸ who had given it to me *had a malicious design*,¹²⁹ and it could not be *out of*¹³⁰ charity that he⁴⁸ had given me such beautiful things; for *my purpose was*¹³¹ to tell the whole adventure to this kind monk, *who had impressed me as being*¹³² *such a righteous man*;¹³³ now¹³⁴ this cap would be a tangible¹³⁵ proof of what I was going to say.¹³⁶

And the dress I had on,⁶⁵ [why!] no indeed, I should not take it off either; he must see²⁸ it; it will be another proof and a still stronger one.

I kept⁷⁷ it [on] and without scruple; reason itself authorized my wearing it, the imperceptible art of my little reasonings

had led me *to this point*,¹³⁷ and I regained¹³⁸ courage *for the present*.¹³⁹

"Well, *I must put on my cap again*;"¹⁴⁰ it was quickly done and I went down intending¹⁴⁰ to go out.

M^{me} Dutour was downstairs¹⁴¹ with her neighbor.

"Where are you going, Marianne?" she said.

"To church," I answered, and *it was hardly a lie*.¹⁴² a church and a convent are very nearly the same thing. "All right,¹⁴³ my dear,"¹⁴⁴ she said, "all right, place yourself under the protection of God's holy will. We were talking about you, my neighbor and myself, I was telling her that tomorrow I would *have a mass said*¹⁴⁵ for your benefit."¹⁴⁶

And, while she was thus speaking to me, this neighbor, who had already seen me two or three times and who up to this time had scarcely looked at me, *opened her eyes wide*,¹⁴⁷ showing this kind of curiosity *characteristic of the lower classes*,¹⁴⁸ *the result being*¹⁴⁹ that she would from time to time *shrug her shoulders*¹⁵⁰ and say: "The poor child, *it is a pity*¹⁵¹ *just from looking at her*¹⁵² no one would take her for anything but *a girl of noble family*."¹⁵³

127. Richardson's Eulogy

By Diderot

This author does not besplash¹ the wainscoting² [with] blood;¹ he does not carry³ you to distant countries; he does not *make you run the risk of*⁴ being devoured by savages; he never loses himself in regions [belonging] to⁵ fairyland.⁵ The world [in which⁶] we live is the stage-setting;⁷ *the main idea*⁸ of his drama is true; his characters⁹ *are as real as they can be*.¹⁰

Richardson sows¹¹ in the heart germs of virtue which at

first remain [there] idle¹² and quiet; there they remain hidden until an occasion arises¹³ which starts¹⁴ them and *makes them break open*.¹⁵

He¹⁶ knows how to make passions speak, sometimes¹⁷ with the violence they have when they can no longer control¹⁸ themselves; sometimes with this artful¹⁹ and moderate tone they assume²⁰ on²¹ other occasions.

He has left in me a (feeling of) melancholy which pleases me and which is lasting; sometimes people²² notice it and ask me: "What is the matter with you? You are not in your normal condition;²³ what has happened²⁴ to you?" They²² inquire²⁵ about my health, my property,²⁶ my relatives,²⁷ my friends. O my friends! Pamela, Clarissa, and Grandisson are three great dramas. O Richardson, Richardson, *unique among men*²⁸ in²⁹ my eyes, thou shalt be my favourite³⁰ *all my life long*!³¹ Driven³² by pressing need, if my friend were to fall into poverty,³³ if my *mediocre means*³⁴ were not sufficient *to meet the expenses of my children's education*,³⁵ I will sell my books; but thou shalt remain to me, thou shalt remain on the same shelf³⁶ with Moses, Euripides, and Sophocles, and I shall read you [all] in turn.³⁷

Richardson's details displease and must displease a frivolous and dissipated man; but it is not for that man that he was writing; it is for the quiet and solitary sage³⁸ who has known the vanity of the world's rush³⁹ and amusements; [a man] who likes to live in *the seclusion of a retreat*,⁴⁰ [in order] *to silently*⁴² *give way to his emotions and profit by them*.⁴¹ You accuse Richardson of *being long*.⁴³ Then⁴⁴ you must have forgotten how⁴⁵ much trouble, care, exertions⁴⁶ it costs *to carry out successfully*⁴⁷ the smallest undertaking, to end a lawsuit, to settle⁴⁸ a marriage, to bring about⁴⁹ a reconciliation. Think of these details what you please,⁵⁰ but for me

they will be interesting if they are true, if they bring out passions, if they display character. "They are common," you say; "it is what we see every day!" You are mistaken;⁵¹ it is what is going⁵² on every day under your eyes and what you never see. Look out;⁵³ *under cover of Richardson's name*⁵⁵ you criticize⁵⁴ the greatest poets. You have seen [a] hundred times the setting⁵⁶ of the sun, the rising of the stars, you have *heard the fields resound with*⁵⁷ the brilliant⁵⁸ song of the birds; but who among⁵⁹ you felt that is was the rumours⁶⁰ of the day which made the silence of the night more touching? Well, *so it is with you both*⁶³ *in the realm*⁶¹ of external⁶² and moral phenomena; outbreaks⁶⁴ of passions have often struck your ears; but you are far from fathoming⁶⁵ *all the secret meanings of*⁶⁶ their accents and of their expressions. There is not one passion who has⁶⁷ not a⁶⁸ physiognomy [of its own]; all the physiognomies succeed each other on a face⁶⁹ and still⁷⁰ it remains the same; the art of the great poet and of the great artist consists in making you see a flitting⁷¹ circumstance which had escaped you. Know that illusion⁷⁴ depends⁷³ *on this multitude*⁷² of small things; there is considerable difficulty in imagining them, and besides, there is also some difficulty in²⁹ rendering them.

... *Pamela* is a novel which is simpler, less extensive,⁷⁵ and *with a less intricate plot*;⁷⁶ but, is there less genius [in it]? Now,⁷⁷ these three books, any one of which would be enough *to make a man famous*,⁷⁸ *have been written*⁷⁹ [by] one man alone.

Since I know them, they have been my touchstone; those who do not like them *are condemned in my eyes*.⁸⁰

I was with a friend, when they²² handed⁸¹ to me [the tale of] the burial and of the will⁸² of *Clarissa*, two passages which the French translator has omitted, *we don't*⁸³ know⁶⁷ exactly⁸⁴

why. This friend is one of the most emotional⁸⁵ men I know,⁶⁷ and one of the most ardent [and] fanatic⁸⁶ [admirers] of Richardson; he admires him almost as much as I do. *He immediately took possession of*⁸⁷ the books, withdrew into a *secluded place*⁸⁸ and began to read. I was watching⁸⁹ him; at first I noticed⁹⁰ his tears, he interrupted his reading, he sobbed, suddenly he rose, he began to walk without knowing whither he was going, he shrieked⁹¹ like a man *in grief*,⁹² and he reproached⁹³ most bitterly all [the members] of the Harlowe family.

Richardson's genius has destroyed⁹⁴ *whatever genius I had*.⁹⁵ His phantoms haunt⁹⁶ my imagination; if I wish to write, I hear the moans of Clementine, Clarissa's shadow *appears before me*,⁹⁷ I see Grandisson walking in front of me, Lovelace disturbs me, and *my pen slips from*⁹⁸ my fingers. And you *sweeter shades*,⁹⁹ Emily, Charlotte, Pamela, dear Miss Howe, while I am conversing with you, the years [devoted to] *work and to the gathering of laurels*¹⁰⁰ pass by,¹⁰¹ and I am advancing towards the last goal,¹⁰² without attempting anything which might⁶⁷ *speak for me in the ages to come*.¹⁰³

128. Selection from "Pamela"

By Richardson

I took all my clothes and all my linen, and I divided¹ them into three parcels, as I had [before] told² Mrs. Jervis I intended³ to do; and I said, "It is now⁴ Monday, Mrs. Jervis, and I *am to go away*⁵ [on] Thursday morning betimes;⁶ so,⁷ though I know⁸ you don't doubt my honesty, *I beg you will*⁷ *look over*⁹ my poor matters,¹⁰ and *let*¹¹ every one have⁸ what belongs¹² to them; for," said I, "you know I am *resolved*¹³ to take with me only what I can *properly call*¹⁴ *my own*."¹⁵

Said she,¹⁶ — I did not know her drift¹⁷ then; *to be sure*¹⁸ she meant well,¹⁹ but I *did not thank her for it*,²⁰ when I did know²¹ it — “*Let your things be brought down*²² in the green room and I will do *anything you will have me do*.”²³

“With²⁴ all my heart,” said I, “*green room or anywhere*,²⁵ but I think²⁶ you *might step up*²⁷ [and] see ‘em *as they lie*.”²⁸

However, I *fetched ‘em down*,²⁹ and laid³⁰ them in three parcels, as before;³¹ and [when] *I had done*³² I went down *to call her up to look at them*.³³

Now, *it seems*,³⁴ she had prepared³⁶ my master for this scene, *unknown to me*,³⁵ and in this green room was *a closet with a sash door*³⁷ and *a curtain before it*,³⁸ — for there she puts her sweetmeats³⁹ and such⁴⁰ things — and she did it, *it seems*,⁴¹ to turn his heart,⁴² [as] knowing what I intended,³ *I suppose that he should make*⁸ *me take the things*,⁴³ for, if he had, I should have made⁴⁴ money of them *to help us*⁴⁵ when we get together;⁴⁶ for, to be sure, I could never have appeared⁴⁷ [in] them. *Well, as I was saying*,⁴⁸ he had got,⁴⁹ *unknown to me*,³⁵ into this closet, — I suppose while I went to call Mrs. Jervis — and she since owned to me, it was *at his desire*⁵⁰ when she *told him something of*⁵¹ what I intended,³ [or] else⁵² she would not have done it.

So I said, when she came up, “Here,⁵³ Mrs. Jervis, is the first parcel; I will *spread it all abroad*.⁵⁴ These are the things my good lady⁵⁵ gave me. — *In the first place*,”⁵⁶ said I — and *so I went on describing*⁵⁷ the clothes and linen my lady⁵⁵ had given me, mingling⁵⁸ blessings, as I proceeded, *for her goodness*⁵⁹ to me; and when I had *turned over*⁶⁰ that parcel, I said, “Well, *so much for the first parcel*,⁶¹ Mrs. Jervis; that⁶² was my lady’s gifts.

Now *I come to*⁶³ the presents of my dear,⁶⁴ virtuous master; hey,⁶⁵ you know *closet for that*,⁶⁶ Mrs. Jervis. She laughed,

and said, "I never⁶⁷ saw such a comical girl in my life! But go on."⁶⁸ "*I will*,"⁶⁹ Mrs. Jervis," said I, "as soon as I have opened the bundle;" for I was as *brisk and as pert*⁷⁰ as *could be*,⁷¹ little thinking⁷² who⁷³ heard me.

"Now here,"⁷⁴ Mrs. Jervis," said I, "are my *ever worthy*⁷⁵ master's presents;" and *then I particularised*⁷⁶ all those in the second bundle.

After which⁷⁷ *I turned to my own*⁷⁸ and said, "Now, Mrs. Jervis, comes⁷⁹ poor Pamela's bundle; *and a little one it is to the others*."⁸⁰ First, here is a calico nightgown that I used to wear⁸¹ o'⁸² mornings. '*Twill be rather too good*⁸³ for me when I get home,⁸⁴ but I must⁸⁵ have⁸ something.⁸⁶ Then there is a quilted calamanco coat,⁸⁷ and a pair of stockings I bought of the pedlar,⁸⁸ and my straw hat with⁸⁹ blue strings, and a remnant of [Scots] cloth, *which will make*⁹⁰ two shirts⁹¹ and two shifts,⁹² *the same I have on*,⁹¹ for my poor father and mother.⁹³ And here are four other shifts, one the fellow⁹⁴ to that I have on, another pretty good one, and the other two old *fine ones*⁹⁵ that *will serve me*⁹⁶ to turn and wind with at home,⁹⁷ for they *are not worth leaving*⁹⁸ [behind me]; and here are two pair of shoes; I have taken the lace off, which I will burn, and maybe will fetch⁴⁴ me some little matter⁹⁹ *at a pinch*,¹⁰⁰ with¹⁰¹ an old silver buckle or two.

What do you laugh for, Mrs. Jervis?" said I. — "Why you *are like*¹⁰² an April day; you cry and laugh *in a breath*."¹⁰³ Well, let me see;¹⁰⁴ ay, here is a cotton handkerchief I bought of the pedlar; *there should be*¹⁰⁵ another somewhere. Oh,¹⁰⁶ here it is! and here, too, are my *new-bought*¹⁰⁷ knit mittens; and this is my new flannel coat,¹⁰⁸ the fellow¹⁰⁹ to that I have on;⁴⁷ and in this parcel, pinned¹¹⁰ together, are several pieces of *printed calico*,¹¹¹ remnants of silks, and such like,

that, [if] *good luck should happen*,¹¹² and¹¹³ I should get work, would serve for facings¹¹⁴ and *such like uses*.¹¹⁵ And here, too, are a pair of pockets; they are too fine for me, but I have no worse. *Bless me*,"¹¹⁶ said I, "I did not think [I] *had so many good things*."¹¹⁷

Well, Mrs. Jervis," said I, "you have seen all my store,¹¹⁸ and I will¹¹⁹ now sit down, and *tell you a piece of my mind*."¹²⁰

"Be brief then,"¹²¹ said she, "*my good girl*:"¹²² for she was afraid,¹²⁴ *she said*¹²³ afterwards, that I should say⁸ too much.¹²⁵

"*Why then, the case is this*:"¹²⁶ *I am to enter upon*¹²⁷ a point of equity¹²⁸ and conscience,¹²⁹ Mrs. Jervis, and I must beg, if you love me,¹³⁰ you'd *let me have my own way*.¹³¹ Those things there *of my lady's*¹³² I can have *no claim to*, so as to *take them away*,¹³³ for she gave them to me, supposing I was to wear them in⁸⁹ her service, *and to do credit to her bountiful heart*.¹³⁴ But, since¹³⁵ I am⁷³ to be *turned away*,¹³⁶ [you know], I cannot wear them at my poor father's, for I should bring *all the little village upon my back*;¹³⁷ and so I resolve¹³⁸ not to have them.

Then, Mrs. Jervis," said I, "I have far less right to these of my worthy master's, for you see¹³⁹ *what was his intention in giving them to me*.¹⁴⁰ So they were to be the price of my shame, and if *I could make use of them*,¹⁴¹ I should think *I should never prosper*¹⁴² [with them]. So, in⁸² conscience, in⁸² honour, [in] everything, *I have nothing to say*¹⁴³ to thee, thou second *wicked bundle*.¹⁴⁴ But," said I, "come to my arms, my dear third parcel, [the] companion of my poverty, [and the] witness of my honesty; and *may I*¹⁴⁵ never deserve the least rag¹⁴⁶ that is contained¹⁴⁷ [in thee], *when I forfeit a title to*¹⁴⁸ that innocence that I hope will ever be *the pride of my life*!¹⁴⁹ and then I am sure it will be *my highest comfort*¹⁵⁰ at my death,¹⁵¹ when all the riches and pomps of the world

will be worse than the vilest rags¹⁵² that can be worn by beggars!" And so¹⁵³ I hugged¹⁵⁴ my third bundle.

"But," said I, "Mrs. Jervis," and she wept to hear me,¹⁵⁵ "one thing more I have to trouble you with,¹⁵⁶ and that's¹⁵⁷ all.

[There are] four¹⁵⁸ guineas, you know, that came out of my good lady's¹⁵⁹ [pocket] when she died,¹⁶¹ that,¹⁶⁰ with some silver, my master gave me. Now these same four guineas I sent to my poor father and mother,⁹³ and they have broken them,¹⁶² but would make them up¹⁶³ if I would, and, if you think it should be so,¹⁶⁴ it shall. But pray tell me honestly your mind:¹⁶⁵ as to the three years¹⁶⁶ [before] my lady's death,¹⁶⁷ do you think, [as] I had no wages, I may⁸ be supposed to be quits?⁷⁷¹⁶⁸

129. The art of writing

By Buffon

In order¹ to write well, one must² unite³ to the light of the intellect⁴ warmth of heart. The soul which receives⁵ both impressions at once,⁶ cannot fail to be pleasantly moved⁷ towards the object which has been presented; it reaches it, grasps it, embraces it, and it is only after having fully enjoyed it, that it is in a condition⁸ to make others participate in its enjoyment⁹ by the expression of its thoughts. The [willing] hand will retrace them,¹⁰ and every¹¹ attentive reader will be partaking¹² of the writer's intellectual treat;¹³ if the objects are simple, all he needs is¹⁴ the art of painting; but if they are complicated, he must besides¹⁴ [have at his command] the art of planning,¹⁵ that is the art of thinking methodically,¹⁶ of patiently reflecting, and of comparing correctly¹⁷ in bringing together scattered¹⁸ ideas, in order¹ to form the continuous chain which will gradually²⁰ present¹⁹ to the mind all sides²¹ of the object. The manner of writing

must, therefore,²³ *vary considerably according to the nature of the subject*,²² and *even when*²⁵ the simplest [subjects are treated], the style, *while preserving*²⁶ a character of simplicity, should not be the same. A great writer should not have a [stamp of his own²⁷]; the same mark²⁸ appearing on different²⁹ productions betrays³⁰ a lack of genius; but what betokens³¹ even more³² [plainly] a *second rate*³³ genius is this: borrowed³⁴ wit, *which has nothing to do with*³⁵ the subject which alone should supply³⁶ it.

To put wit everywhere is a mania with our young writers; they do not see that, unless *this wit*³⁷ is *the natural outgrowth*³⁸ of their subject, it only spoils the presentation of it; *strewing*³⁹ *flowers out of place*⁴⁰ is no better than *scattering*⁴¹ thorns. With more genius, they would find in the subject itself all the wit they should employ. *Were their taste formed*⁴² on good models, they would not only reject this wit *which has no connection with*³⁵ the subject, but *it would not even occur to them*⁴³ to seek after⁴⁴ it. This same taste would induce⁴⁵ them to avoid *all kinds of obscurity in expression*,⁴⁶ to leave out every sentence *which might be out of place*⁴⁷ in subjects *which, in order*¹ *to be well presented, need simply to be pictured*.⁴⁸ The subject *in this case*⁴⁹ is nothing but an object, the image of which has to be rendered⁵⁰ by an accurate⁵¹ drawing, [by] *well matched colours*.⁵²

To describe and to picture are two different things; *for the former*⁵³ eyes only are needed,⁵⁴ [while] the latter⁵³ demands⁵⁵ genius. Although both *have*⁴⁹ *the same end in view*,⁵⁶ they cannot *keep step with each other*.⁵⁷ A⁵⁸ description presents coldly and *in succession*⁵⁹ all the parts of an object; the more minute⁶⁰ it is, the less effective⁶¹ painting,⁵⁸ on the contrary, grasping at first the most striking⁶² features, only keeps the stamp⁶³ of the object and gives life to it.

In order to describe well, it is sufficient *to look at a thing in cold blood*,⁶⁴ but, [when it comes] to painting, all the senses *have to come into play*.⁶⁵

To see, to hear, to touch, to smell are so many characteristic impressions which the writer must feel and render with⁶⁶ forceful⁶⁷ traits. He must combine⁶⁸ to the *delicacy of colouring*⁶⁹ the *vigourous handling of the brush*,⁷⁰ shade⁷¹ the colours,⁷² deepen⁷³ or blend them,⁷³ *in short, he must form*⁷⁴ a living ensemble, while the description [of it] can only present lifeless⁷⁵ and detached parts.

Is it possible, it will be said, to draw⁵⁰ a picture with sentences and to reproduce colours with words? Yes, and even, if the writer has genius, [good] judgment and taste, his style, his sentences, his words will be more effective⁶¹ than the brush and the colours of the artist. What is the impression [of]⁷⁶ an amateur when he looks [at] a beautiful picture? *The longer he looks at it*,⁷⁸ *the stronger grows his admiration*,⁷⁷ he perceives all its beauties, all the lights, all the colours. The writer who wishes to paint must *take the standpoint*⁷⁹ of the amateur, receive⁸⁰ the same impressions, and *communicate*⁸¹ them to his reader in the very same order the amateur received them while²⁶ he was looking at his picture.

All the objects *nature*⁸² presents us, and in particular all living beings, are *so many*⁸³ subjects of which the writer *must be able*⁸⁴ to make not only the portrait in repose but the picture *in motion*,⁸⁵ in which all the forms will develop [in full], all the features of the portrait will seem alive,⁸⁶ presenting *at once*⁸⁷ all the external characteristics of the object.

Genius being equal,⁸⁸ the writer has over the artist⁸⁹ the great advantage *of having time at his command*,⁹⁰ [he] *may*

let one⁹² scene follow⁹¹ another,⁹² while the painter can only present an action which takes place in one moment;⁹³ therefore²³ he can only produce a sudden⁹⁴ surprise, an instantaneous admiration, which vanishes as soon as the object disappears. Not only⁹⁵ can the great writer produce this first effect,⁹⁶ but he can besides warm⁹⁷ and even fire⁹⁷ his readers by the presentation of several actions, all of which⁹⁸ will have warmth and which, by their union and the light they shed, will leave on their memory an indelible picture⁹⁹ which will have a life of its own, entirely¹⁰⁰ independent of the object.

From time immemorial,¹⁰² poetry and painting have been compared,¹⁰¹ but it never occurred to any one to think that prose could picture better than poetry. The rhyme and the meter¹⁰³ hinder¹⁰⁴ the freedom of the brush; on account of one syllable more or less, picturesque words¹⁰⁵ have to be unwillingly¹⁰⁶ set aside¹⁰⁷ by the poet, while they can be used to advantage by the prose writer. Style, which is [after all] nothing but order and motion given¹⁰¹ to our thoughts, is necessarily constrained by an arbitrary rule or interrupted by pauses which, while they diminish¹⁰⁸ its⁵⁸ rapidity, mar¹⁰⁹ its⁵⁸ regular beauty.¹¹⁰

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130. Enumeration

Selection from "Pamela" by Richardson

He said, "You are very¹ good, my dearest girl.² But how will you bestow³ your time, when you will have no visits to receive⁵ or pay,⁴ no parties of pleasure [to join in?"⁶]

"Oh sir," said I, "you are all goodness.⁷ How shall I bear it?⁸ — But do you think, sir, in such a family⁹ as yours, a¹⁰

person whom you *shall honour with the name of*¹¹ mistress of it will not find useful¹³ *employments for her time*,¹² without *looking abroad for any others*?¹⁴

In the first place, sir, if you will give¹⁵ me leave,¹⁶ *I will myself look into*¹⁷ *such parts*¹⁸ of the family¹⁹ economy as may not be beneath the rank to²⁰ which I shall have the honour of being exalted,²¹ *if any such there can be*,²² and *this*,²³ I hope, without *incurring the ill will*²⁴ of any honest servant.

Then,²⁵ sir, I will ease²⁷ you of as much of your *family accounts*²⁸ as *I possibly can*,²⁶ when²⁹ I have convinced you that I am to be trusted³⁰ [with] them; and you know, sir, my *late good lady*³¹ made me³² her treasurer, her almoner, and everything.³³

Then, sir, if I must needs³⁴ be visiting⁴ or visited,³⁰ and the ladies won't *honour me so much*,³⁵ or even if they would *now and then*,³⁶ I will visit, if *your goodness*¹⁵ will allow me *so to do*,³⁷ the [sick] poor in³⁸ the neighborhood³⁹ [around you], and *administer to their wants and necessities*⁴⁰ in *such matters as may not be hurtful to your estate*,⁴¹ but comfortable⁴² to them, and entail⁴³ upon you their blessings, and⁴⁴ their prayers *for your*⁴⁵ [dear] health and welfare.⁴⁶

Then⁴⁷ I will assist your housekeeper,⁴⁸ *as I used to do*,⁴⁷ in the making jellies, comfits,⁴⁹ sweetmeats, marmalades, cordials, and *to pot, and candy, and preserve*⁵⁰ for the uses of the family, and to make, myself, all the fine linen [of it] for yourself and me.

131a. Les paysages alpestres

[Rousseau est passé maître dans l'art de peindre avec les mots; il introduit dans la littérature le paysage.]

I wanted to dream and I was constantly prevented¹ from doing it by some unexpected sight.² Sometimes huge³ shat-

tered⁴ rocks hung over my head. Sometimes some high and noisy cascades drenched⁵ me with their thick mist. Sometimes an eternal torrent opened by my side⁶ an abyss, the depth⁷ of which my eyes dared not fathom.⁷ Occasionally⁸ I would lose myself in the darkness⁹ of a leafy¹⁰ wood. Sometimes,⁸ [after] emerging from an abyss, a pleasing meadow would suddenly rejoice my eyes. An astonishing combination¹¹ of wild and of cultivated nature showed everywhere the hand of man, where you might have thought he never had penetrated; close by a cave¹² you found houses; you saw dried *vine leaves*¹³ *where you might have expected to find nothing*¹⁴ but brambles,¹⁵ vineyards on *landslides*,¹⁶ excellent fruits [growing] on rocks, and fields in abysses.¹⁷

Nouvelle Héloïse.

131b. Le jardin de Julie

This place,¹⁸ although *close by*¹⁹ the house, is so well hidden by the *arching trees of the avenue*²⁰ that *it cannot be seen*²¹ from *any one spot*.²² The thick foliage which surrounds²³ it *makes it impossible for any one*²⁴ to penetrate it, and it is always carefully locked.²⁵ *Hardly had I entered it*,²⁶ when,²⁷ *on turning round*,³⁰ the entrance being screened²⁸ by hazel trees and alders which leave only two narrow passages, *one on each side*,²⁹ I could not see *which way*³¹ I had entered; and not discovering³² any door, *it seemed to me I had dropped there from the sky*.³³ On entering this *so-called orchard*,³⁴ I was struck by a pleasing sensation of coolness; *the dusky shade of the foliage*,³⁵ a *bright and lusty*³⁶ verdure, flowers scattered³⁷ on³⁸ all sides, the babbling³⁹ of running water, and the song of [a] thousand birds *worked on*⁴⁰ my imagination at least as much as on my senses; but, at the same time,

I thought I saw the wildest, the most secluded⁴¹ place¹⁸ in³⁸ the universe, and it seemed to me *as if I were*⁴² the first mortal who had ever *forced his way*⁴³ into this wilderness.⁴⁴ Surprised, dumb with astonishment, *carried away*⁴⁵ by *such an unforeseen*⁴⁶ spectacle, I remained [for] a moment *perfectly still*⁴⁷ and I exclaimed with⁴⁸ involuntary enthusiasm: "O Tinian! O Juan Fernandez! Julie, the end of the universe is at your door!" "Like you, many people have discovered it here, she said with a smile, "but [by walking] twenty steps farther,⁴⁹ *they easily reach*⁵⁰ Clarenø; let us see *if you will be longer under the spell*.⁵¹ *This is*⁵² the very same orchard where you once used to walk and where my cousin and you *pelted each other with*⁵³ peaches. You remember the grass was rather scant,⁵⁴ the trees *far and wide apart*⁵⁴ gave very little shade, and there was no water. *Now you see it*⁵⁵ cool, green, adorned,⁵⁶ blossoming, watered.⁵⁷ How much do you think it has *cost me*⁵⁸ to put it into condition?⁵⁹ for, *you have to know*⁶⁰ that I am the superintendent⁶¹ of it, and that my husband leaves to me the entire care⁶² of it." "Well,"⁶³ said I, "*all you have done is*⁶⁴ to let things take care of themselves;⁶⁴ I do not see any human work at all. You have closed the door; the water came, I don't know how; nature alone did all the rest; and you would never have been *able to do*⁶⁵ as well." "It is true," she said, "that nature has done everything, but under my guidance, and there is nothing here that I have not ordered. Try again, guess." "First," I said, "I do not see how, by taking trouble and by spending money, you could *make up for*⁶⁶ time." "The trees . . . as for that," said M. de Wolmar, "you will notice there are not many large [ones], and those were already there. Besides, Julie began this long before her marriage, *shortly*⁶⁷ after her mother's death, [when] she came here with her

father to seek solitude." "Well," I said, "since you *insist on the fact*⁶⁸ that *these masses of green*,⁶⁹ [these arching trees⁷⁰], these *mantling vines*,⁷¹ these shady groves,⁷² grew⁷³ in seven or eight years *with skilled help*,⁷⁴ I *dare say*⁷⁵ that if you have done it *on such extensive grounds*⁷⁶ for two thousand dollars you have *done it very reasonably*."⁷⁷ "You *overstate the price*⁷⁸ only by two thousand dollars," she said; "it has not cost⁷⁸ me anything." "Not anything, what do you mean?"⁷⁹ "No, not anything; unless you count a dozen *days of work*⁸⁰ a⁸¹ year *given by*³⁸ my gardner, as much *given by*³⁸ two or three of my servants,⁸² and a few by M. de Wolmar himself, who did not *consider it below his dignity*⁸³ [to take] occasionally [the place of] *assistant gardner*."⁸⁴ I *could not understand the mystery*,⁸⁵ but Julie who, up to this time, had held me back, said while letting me go: "Go on,⁸⁶ and you will understand. Farewell⁸⁷ Tinian, farewell, Juan Fernandez, *the spell is broken*.⁸⁸ In a few minutes⁸⁹ you will have returned⁹⁰ from the end of the world."

In a sort of ecstasy I *began to wander through*⁹¹ this transformed orchard; and if I did not find exotic plants and products from the Indies, I found those of the land⁹² which had been *brought together*⁹³ [in this place] and arranged⁹³ so as to make the most pleasing and smiling⁹⁵ effect.⁹⁴ *Along with*⁹⁷ the verdant grass,⁹⁶ short and thick (grew) thyme, balsam, *sweet marjoram*,⁹⁸ and many other fragrant⁹⁹ plants. *Wild flowers*¹⁰¹ [by the] thousand *were shining there*,¹⁰⁰ and your eye discovered¹⁰³ with surprise a few garden *flowers among them*¹⁰² which seemed to grow naturally with the others. *Every now and then*¹⁰⁵ I *came across*¹⁰⁴ *dark thickets*,¹⁰⁶ [so] *dense that the light*¹⁰⁷ of the sun [could not shine through], [any more than it could through]¹⁰⁸ the thickest forest; those clusters¹⁰⁶ had been formed with³⁸ trees of the most

flexible wood; the branches had *been made to bend down*¹⁰⁹ and take root, by a *process similar*¹¹⁰ *to the one which is natural to the*¹¹¹ American¹¹³ *mango tree*.¹¹² In the more open¹¹⁴ grounds,¹⁸ I saw here and there, without order and without symmetry, tangles¹¹⁵ of rose bushes, of raspberry, of currant, of lilacs, of hazelnut, of elder, of syringa, of broom, of trefoil which, (while) adorning⁵⁰ the ground,¹¹⁶ *seemed to preserve*¹¹⁷ (its) *uncultivated appearance*.¹¹⁸ I was following winding¹¹⁹ and irregular paths, edged¹²⁰ by [wild] flowering groves,¹²¹ *mantled with a*¹²² thousand garlands of Virginia creeper,¹²³ hop,¹²⁴ *morning glory*,¹²⁵ briony,¹²⁶ clematis, and other plants of the kind, *and here and there*¹²⁷ honeysuckle¹²⁸ and jasmine *condescended to mix with them*.¹²⁹ These garlands seemed to be carelessly¹³⁰ thrown from tree to tree as I had sometimes seen it in our forests, and they formed over us a sort of drapery which protected us from the sun, while we were walking on something soft, convenient, and dry, a fine moss, without sand, without grass, and without shoots.¹³¹

Then only did I discover, and not without surprise, that *the heavy green foliage*¹³² which from afar *had made such an impression on me*¹³³ was entirely made up of vines and creepers¹³⁴ which, being trained¹³⁵ along the trees, surrounded¹³⁶ their tops with the thickest foliage and their feet with coolness and shade. *Following the paths*¹³⁷ or crossing them *there were clear and limpid streams*,¹³⁸ now running¹³⁹ among the flowers and the grass in almost invisible streamlets,¹⁴⁰ now in larger brooks over a *clear bed of spotted gravel*¹⁴¹ which made¹⁴² the water seem¹⁴² more sparkling.¹⁴³ You could see springs *bubbling from*¹⁴⁴ the ground, and here and there in deeper canals all the objects were reflected in the calm surface of the still waters.

Nouvelle Héloïse.

132. Rousseau pédagogue

Parlant de l'étude de l'arithmétique, Rousseau dit dans les Confessions: «Je l'appris bien, car je l'appris seul»; d'autre part il dit aussi: «S'il y a de l'avantage à étudier seul, il y a aussi de grands inconvénients, et surtout une peine incroyable.» Paméla, lorsqu'il s'agit d'élever sa famille, a souvent l'occasion de citer M. Locke; Rousseau, lui aussi, s'en est inspiré quand il a voulu faire comprendre à ses contemporains ce que l'éducation devait être. Les précepteurs d'alors étaient des ignorants, à peu d'exceptions près. Rousseau eut l'idée de créer un précepteur modèle qui sait tout et qui possède, en outre, l'art de s'effacer; sa méthode consiste à tout préparer pour que son élève soit à même de tout découvrir par lui-même; à la routine Rousseau substituait le travail original et individuel, qui devait être aussi intéressant et agréable que possible.

133a. Selections from Rousseau's "Emile"

You¹ will be surprised [to hear] that I consider² the study of languages *as among*³ the *useless things*⁴ in⁵ education, but you¹ will [have to] remember that *here*⁶ I am only speaking of the studies *suitable for young children*,⁷ and, whatever may¹ be said,⁸ I do not believe that up to the age of twelve or fifteen any⁹ child, *except for prodigies*,¹⁰ has⁸ ever really learned two languages.

I admit that if the study of languages were only the study of words, that is to say of signs or sounds which express them, this study might be suitable¹¹ for children; but the languages, while¹² changing the signs, modify also the ideas

which they represent. The minds¹³ [are] formed¹⁴ on the languages, the thoughts take the coloring¹⁵ of the speech.¹⁶ Reason alone is [a] common [property]; the mind in¹² each language has its characteristic¹⁷ form, [a] difference which might be partly the cause or the effect of national characteristics, and what seems to confirm this conjecture is that, among¹⁸ all the nations of the world, the language follows the vicissitudes of custom¹⁹ and [either keeps its integrity]²⁰ or *changes for the worse*²¹ as they [do]. Of these different forms, usage gives one to the child and it is the only one he keeps until he reaches⁸ the age of reason. In order²² to have two languages,²³ he would have²⁴ to be able²⁵ to compare ideas; and how could he compare them, when he is hardly capable of grasping²⁶ them. Every object may have for him a thousand different signs, but each idea can have but one form; therefore he can learn how to speak only one language. Yet people¹ tell me *he learns several*;²⁷ I deny it. I have seen those little prodigies who thought they *could speak*²⁸ five or six languages. I heard them speak German *while they were using*,³⁰ *in turn*,²⁹ Latin words,³⁰ French [words], Italian [words]; *it is true*³² they used³¹ the vocabulary of five or six dictionaries, yet they were speaking German *all the time*.³³ *In short*,³⁴ give a child as many synonyms as you please; you will change the words, not³⁵ the language; they will know but one.

133b. Manual toil

You trust³⁶ to the *present order*³⁷ of society without thinking that this order *is liable to undergo*³⁸ unavoidable revolutions and that it³⁹ is impossible *for you*³⁹ to foresee or to ward⁴⁰ off the one which may concern⁴¹ your children. The

great [man] becomes small, the rich becomes poor, the monarch becomes [a] subject; are the *strokes of fortune*⁴² so rare that you may⁸ rely² [on] being free from⁴³ them? We are nearing a period of crisis, an age of revolutions. Who can [tell you beforehand⁴⁴] what will become of you then? All that has been made by men, men can destroy; the only *indelible stamp*⁴⁵ is the one nature gives,⁴⁶ and nature makes neither princes, nor rich [men], nor lords.⁴⁷ Then,⁴⁸ in [a low station]⁴⁹ what will this satrap do, whom you have brought up for greatness only? In poverty what will this money-maker⁵⁰ do, who lives only on gold? . . . Happy *then the man*⁵¹ who can leave the position which leaves him, and remain a man in spite of fate! [Any one who wishes to, may praise⁵²] as much as he pleases the vanquished king who, *like a madman*,⁵³ wishes to bury himself under his crumbling⁵⁴ throne; I despise him; I see that he exists only *because of*⁵⁵ his crown, and that he is nothing at all if he is not [a] king; but the one who loses it and *does without it*⁵⁶ is then above it. From the rank of king, which a coward, a wicked [man], a madman⁵⁷ may occupy *as well as anybody*,⁵⁸ he *risks to the position*⁵⁹ of man which so few men know how to fill. Then he triumphs over⁵ fate, he can defy⁶⁰ it; *all he owes he owes to himself*,⁶¹ and if nothing is left him but himself, he is not absolutely null, he is somebody. . . .

*The man*⁶² who eats in idleness⁶³ the bread he has not earned himself steals it; and *a man who owns government bonds*⁶⁴ [and] who is paid *so that he*²² may live without working *is not very different*,⁶⁵ *in my opinion*,⁶⁶ from the highwayman who lives at the expense of the passers by. . . . I am bound⁶⁷ to have Emile learn⁸ a trade. A respectable⁶⁸ trade at least, you will say! What does this word mean? Is not every trade which is useful to the public a respectable

trade? I do not wish him to be⁸ [an] embroiderer, or [a] gilder, or [a] varnisher, like Locke's gentleman. I do not wish him to be⁸ either [a] musician, or [a] comedian, or [a] writer⁶⁹ of books. [With these exceptions⁷⁰] and other *similar ones*,⁷¹ he may⁸ take *any occupation*⁷² he may wish. I had rather he would⁸ be [a] shoemaker than [a] poet, I had rather he would pave the highways⁷³ than make porcelain flowers. But, you will say, the archers, the spies, the hangmen, are useful people. It *depends on*⁷⁴ government to *make them useless*.⁷⁵ But *let us leave them aside*;⁷⁶ I was wrong; it is not enough to choose a useful trade, it is also necessary that this occupation should not require⁷⁷ from the people who practice⁷⁸ it characteristics⁷⁹ which are⁸ hateful⁸⁰ and incompatible with humanity. . . .

Everything being considered,⁸¹ the trade I would like best to *suit*⁸ my pupil's taste⁸² would be that of joiner.⁸³ It is clean, it is useful, it can be practiced⁷⁸ at home, it keeps⁸⁴ the body sufficiently active,⁸⁴ it requires from the workman skill and application, and, *although*⁸⁵ the shape of the objects [is]⁸⁶ determined [by] utility, elegance and taste are not excluded. . . . When Emile learns his trade, I mean⁸⁷ to learn it with him, for I am convinced that he will only learn well what we learn together.

134a. Fragment de lettre de l'abbé Galiani à M^{me} d'Epinaÿ

My Treatise on Education¹ is all done. I prove that education for man and for animals *is the same*.² *The whole thing in a nutshell is this*:³ learn how to bear injustice, and become used to being bored.⁴ *What do they teach*⁵ the horses in a riding school?⁶ The horse *without any training can*⁷

pace,⁸ trot, gallop, or walk.⁹ But he does it *whenever he feels like it*,¹⁰ and *with him it is entirely a matter of will*.¹¹ They teach him to take these different gaits¹² in spite of himself, *against his best judgment*¹³ (that is injustice) and he has to *keep doing*¹⁴ *the same thing*¹⁵ [for] two hours; that is boredom. Now¹⁶ if you¹⁷ make¹⁸ a child study [either] Latin, Greek, or French, the main²⁰ thing *is not the usefulness*¹⁹ of the subject; *the point is*²¹ that he must become used to submit himself to somebody else's will (and be bored), and be flogged²² by *some one*²³ [who is] born his equal (and suffer). When he is used to this, he is trained, he is sociable, he goes into society, he *shows proper respect*²⁴ [to] magistrates, ministers, kings (and does not complain about it). He *fulfils the duties of his position*,²⁵ and he is in²⁶ his office, or in court, or in the barracks,²⁷ or in the king's bedchamber,²⁸ and [he] yawns, and remains there earning his living. If he does not do that, he is not *good for anything*²⁹ in a well-ordered society. Therefore³⁰ education is the lopping³¹ of all natural talents which are to give place to social duties. If education does not accomplish [this end¹⁵], you have poets, improvisators, bravi, painters, the funny man,³² *the man with an eccentric turn*³³ who amuses but dies of hunger, [since] he cannot³⁴ fit³⁵ into any of the niches which society provides.³⁶ The English, the nation which is least trained³⁷ in³⁸ the world, and therefore the greatest, the most embarrassing (one) and soon the unhappiest of all. . . .

Besides,³⁹ the rule *holds good*⁴⁰ in general: all the pleasing methods of *imparting knowledge*⁴¹ to children are false and absurd, for *the point is*⁴² not to learn geography, or geometry, *the thing is*⁴² to get used to work, that is to say to boredom, to fix the mind on one object, etc. A child *who has mastered*⁴³ the names of all the capitals of Europe will not have

taken the habit of concentrating his attention on his account book, and our geographer will be robbed by his steward and he will *become bankrupt in the very midst*⁴⁴ of his capitals. Start from these theories, develop them, you will have a book *entirely different from*⁴⁵ the "Emilius," and *all the better for that reason*.⁴⁶ But you have forbidden me ever to become [the] mother of [a] family, and *for the last hour*⁴⁷ I have been jabbering⁴⁸ [on] education. Let us talk about something else. I am writing to-night two short letters to Suard and to Madame Necker. I *let you know about it*⁴⁹ since you are so fond of them, but it is hardly worth while *to look them up*.⁵⁰

Farewell my fair lady, I kiss the prophet,* the philosopher,† and every kissable person. If you wish to see me again in Paris, *do what you can to make*⁵¹ my return [possible].

L'éducation du sentiment

134b. Lord Chesterfield to Madame du Boccage

I *am in favor of*⁵² the influence⁵³ of education, while admitting⁵⁴ that our natural *bent*⁵⁵ *has some share*⁵⁶ in our *make-up*.⁵⁷ Of course, education does not give a *good mind*⁵⁸ to those to whom nature has refused common sense, but education gives⁵⁹ *our mind its*⁶¹ *particular turn*,⁶⁰ and even if our⁶² heart *does not owe everything to*⁶³ education, it is largely⁶⁴ modelled⁶⁵ by it. It is for that reason, very likely, that butchers, hangmen, and inquisitors are less kindly⁶⁶ and more bloodthirsty⁶⁷ than other men. *As for*⁶⁸ those fine feelings of natural affection which shine in novels, in tragedies, and even at present in "your comédies larmoyantes," [I cannot think of] anything⁶⁹ more absurd: a father, a

*Grimm. †Diderot.

mother, a husband, a wife, children which have never seen each other, are mutually⁷¹ *conscious of their kinship because of*⁷⁰ *a sudden emotion*,⁷² *a thrill*,⁷³ *or anything you wish to call it*,⁷⁴ *this emotion being caused*⁷⁵ *at first sight by a*⁷⁶ *natural feeling. If such a sentiment existed, what discoveries and consequently what disorder would be the result of it*,⁷⁷ *both in Paris and in London.*

Here you have my opinion on the library with which you have supplied⁷⁸ me and which has greatly entertained⁷⁹ me.

I wish I could send you something from here to amuse you, but of late nothing interesting has been published. The Muses are so busy in your country that they have not time to call on us.

J.-J. Rousseau fait appel à tous les sens

135. Selections from the "Confessions"

Une nuit à la belle étoile

I had absolutely¹ no care about the future, *spending the night in the open air*² and sleeping *on the ground*³ or on a bench as comfortably⁴ as on a bed of roses. I even remember having spent a delightful night outside⁵ the city walls, in a path which *kept close to the bank*⁶ of the Rhône or the Saône, for I do not remember which of the two it was. Gardens raised in terraces bordered the path on⁷ the opposite side. It had been very warm that day, the evening⁸ was delightful; the dew sprinkled⁹ the faded grass; no wind, a still night; the air was cool without being cold; the sun after *going down*¹⁰ had left in the sky red vapors, *and their reflexion*¹¹ *gave a rosy hue to the water*,¹² the trees of the terraces were full¹³ of nightingales which answered each other

from tree¹⁴ to tree. I was walking¹⁵ in a sort of ecstasy, abandoning my senses and my heart to the enjoyment of it all, and sighing a little because I felt sorry I had to enjoy it alone. Lost in my sweet reverie, I prolonged my walk *way into*¹⁶ the night, without noticing¹⁷ that I was tired;¹⁸ I noticed it at last. I lay down luxuriously¹⁹ on the ledge²⁰ of a sort of niche or sham door²¹ cut²² into the wall of a terrace; the canopy²³ of my bed was formed by the tops of the trees; a nightingale was just above me; *his song lulled me to sleep*;²⁴ my sleep was sweet, my awakening *was still sweeter*.²⁵ It was *broad daylight*;²⁶ my eyes, on opening, saw the water, the foliage, a wonderful landscape. I rose, I shook myself, *and, beginning to feel hungry*,²⁷ I *set cheerfully on my way*,²⁸ having resolved *to spend in getting*²⁹ a good breakfast, two silver coins I still had; I was in³⁰ such good humor that I *kept singing*³¹ all³² the way, and I even remember I was singing a cantata by Batistin, called³³ "Les Bains de Thomery," which I knew by heart.

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, peintre de la nature

136a. Tableau

Who could recognize in a dry rose the queen of flowers? *If it*¹ is to be an object of love and philosophy, *you must*² see it when *it springs*³ from a cleft⁴ in a damp rock and shines *among its green leaves*,⁵ when⁶ zephyr makes its thorny⁸ stem *wave to and fro*,⁷ when⁶ the dawn⁹ has *bathed it with*¹⁰ tears,¹¹ and when⁶ by its brilliancy and its fragrance it tempts¹² the hands of lovers. Sometime a rosebug,¹³ hidden in its corolla heightens¹⁴ by its emerald green¹⁶ the crimson¹⁵ [hue] *of the rose*,¹⁵ then this flower seems to tell us that [it stands as the] symbol of pleasure, *because of*¹⁷ its charm and

of¹⁷ its short duration, *and like pleasure*¹⁸ *it is surrounded by danger*,¹⁹ and repentance *abides within it*.²⁰ ETUDE I.

136b. L'Exotisme dans le Roman

Rousseau avait décrit la nature des pays tempérés. Dans «Paul et Virginie», Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, le prenant pour modèle, sut voir en peintre et rendre avec une merveilleuse richesse de coloris les paysages des tropiques, introduisant ainsi dans la littérature un élément nouveau: l'exotisme. Du même coup il entr'ouvrait aussi à l'inexactitude la porte que Chateaubriand allait ouvrir toute grande.

136c. Virginia's Garden

But of all [the things] *that were to be found in*²¹ this enclosure,²² nothing was more delightful than the place they²³ called Virginia's *resting place*.²⁴ At the foot of the rock, Discovery of Friendship, [there] is a *deep recess*²⁵ whence springs a fountain which forms, *at its very outset*,²⁶ a little pool²⁷ of water, in the midst of a meadow²⁸ of the finest grass. When Marguerite *gave birth*²⁹ to Paul, I *presented*³⁰ her with³¹ a cocoanut³² from the Indies which had²³ been given me. She planted this fruit on the edge of this little pool of water, *so that*³³ the tree which *was to grow from it*³⁴ could serve³⁵ sometime³⁶ *to mark*³⁷ the birth of her son. Following³⁸ her example, M^{me} de La Tour, with³⁹ a similar intention, planted⁴⁰ another. From these two fruits *sprang up*⁴¹ two cocoanut trees⁴² which were all the archives of the two families; one was called Paul's tree, and the other Virginia's tree. They both⁴³ *grew in proportion with*⁴⁴ their young owners, *being*⁴⁵ a little [bit] unequal in size,⁴⁵ *and*

yet,⁴⁶ at the end of twelve years, they *overtopped*⁴⁶ their cabins.⁴⁷ They already interlaced their palms, and hung⁴⁸ their young clusters⁴⁹ of cocoanuts over the basin of the fountain. *With the exception of*⁵⁰ this plantation, they²³ had left this little rocky⁵¹ recess²⁵ as⁵² nature had adorned it. On its brown and damp sides⁵³ large *star-like*⁵⁴ black and green maidenhair⁵⁵ ferns *were expanding*⁵⁴ and *waving at the will of the winds*;⁵⁶ clusters⁵⁷ of scolopendras were drooping⁵⁸ like long ribbons of purplish⁵⁹ green. *Close by*⁶⁰ grew borders⁶¹ of periwinkles *with their flowers so*⁶² similar to those of the red gilliflower,⁶³ and pimentos with⁶² their blood-colored⁶⁵ pods⁶⁴ brighter⁶⁶ than corals. Near by, balsam plants with⁶² *their heart-shaped*⁶⁷ leaves, and sweet basil⁶⁸ *with its clovelike fragrance*⁶⁹ *were sending forth*⁷⁰ the most delicious perfume. *From the steep side*⁷¹ of the mountain, vines⁷² drooped like floating draperies, which formed on the side of the rocks large curtains⁷³ of verdure. The sea birds, attracted to these peaceful retreats, came there to spend the night. At sunset you could see flying along the seashore the *great snipe*⁷⁴ and the sea lark, and *from high above*;⁷⁵ the black frigate [bird], with the white bird from the tropics who, *along with*⁷⁶ the sun,⁷⁷ left the solitudes of the Indian Ocean. Virginia liked to rest on the edge of this fountain decorated with a wild and magnificent pomp. Often she came there to wash the family linen [under³⁸] the shade of the cocoanut trees. Sometimes she would *bring her goats there to pasture*.⁷⁸ While she was preparing cheese from their milk, she enjoyed⁷⁹ looking at them, while they were browsing⁸⁰ the maidenhair ferns on the steep sides of the rocks, or *standing way up*⁸¹ on [top of] one of the ledges⁸² as on a pedestal. Paul, seeing that Virginia loved this place, brought there from the neighboring⁸³ forest the nests

of all kinds of birds. The fathers and mothers of these birds followed their young⁸⁴ and came to settle in this new colony. Virginia used from time to time to scatter⁸⁵ for them rice, *Indian corn*,⁸⁶ and millet. As soon as she appeared, the blackbirds, the finches⁸⁷ whose song is so sweet, the cardinal [birds] with⁶² their fiery⁸⁸ plumage, left their bushes; parrots [as] green as emeralds came down from the surrounding palm trees; partridges were hastening⁸⁹ [from] under the grass; all came pell-mell to her feet as if they had been hens.

136d. Error of Judgment

As soon as⁹⁰ Necker came into prominence,⁹¹ M^{me} Necker opened her salon to the scattered⁹² members of M^{me} Geofrin's circle.⁹³ Once a week she gathered around her table men prominent⁹⁴ *in literature*,⁹⁵ and with them some women sought after on account of⁹⁶ their beauty and of their wit. At M^{me} Necker's evening receptions points of literature and criticism were discussed.⁹⁷ New books were read aloud,⁹⁸ and on their merits⁹⁹ this select company were afterwards called upon to give an opinion.¹⁰⁰ One evening when⁶ all the company had gathered,¹⁰¹ an unknown [man] was announced. It was [the name of] a young author recently returned from a long journey, who came to give a reading of his first novel. The reading began; Buffon was *in the audience*.¹⁰² At first, they listened in silence; a few signs of boredom soon followed, then they did not listen any more. Buffon seemed to be absent-minded;¹⁰³ he looked [at] his watch, asked [for] his carriage and went; Thomas was asleep. The reading over, they²³ advised the author of the manuscript, who seemed to be a little disconcerted¹⁰⁴

by the cold reception¹⁰⁵ given¹⁰⁶ to his work, to retouch it and to wait, then they²³ spoke about something else and the newcomer was forgotten. And yet, the book which had thus been scorned was "Paul and Virginia," and *this book alone was to make*¹⁰⁷ Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's reputation, and designate him to Louis XVI as a worthy successor of Buffon.

NADAULT DE BUFFON.

137. Influence grecque

Il est difficile aujourd'hui de se rendre compte de l'influence prépondérante qu'exerçait sur la France d'autrefois la littérature grecque. Nourris des classiques, qu'ils lisaient dans l'original, les Français cultivés avaient en outre pour livre de chevet l'admirable «Plutarque» d'Amyot; œuvre unique en son genre, où le traducteur, par le seul mérite du style, a fait une œuvre profondément originale.

Tout en donnant libre cours à son imagination également éprise de voyages en terres étrangères et de réformes politiques, Fénelon, dans les «Aventures de Télémaque», avait su populariser la mythologie grecque. Au XVIII^{me} siècle, Barthélemy, dans son «Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce», avait ravivé les souvenirs qui se rattachaient à cette patrie intellectuelle des Français, aimée et révérée à l'égal de la vraie patrie. Ce fut encore vers la Grèce que se tournèrent les esprits pour chercher, dans l'histoire de ce peuple libre, des modèles de gouvernement républicain. Cependant, tandis que l'histoire et la philosophie grecques gagnent du terrain, la mythologie se voit reléguée au second plan; pied à pied elle se voit forcée hors de ses retranchements; bannie irrévocablement du domaine des sciences par Buffon, tolérée dans l'art par Diderot, à condition seule-

ment qu'elle se fasse bien simple et familiale, elle va se réfugier dans la poésie, où, avec André Chénier, elle fait une apparition fugitive et charmante. D'instinct, ce fils de la Grèce comprit que la mythologie devait se confondre avec la vie. Après avoir touché la terre, les nymphes, les Néréides s'en trouvèrent comme rajeunies. Pour comprendre comment Chénier put opérer ce miracle, il faut lire les lettres écrites par sa mère sur les danses et les enterrements grecs. Grecque de race, Française par son mariage, M^{me} Chénier savait, avec un enthousiasme vibrant, parler de son pays d'origine et en représenter les mœurs en tableaux colorés. C'est d'elle, sans doute, qu'André Chénier tenait l'imagination gracieuse qui devait donner à sa poésie cette fraîcheur d'inspiration qu'on chercherait en vain chez ceux qu'au XVIII^{me} siècle, on prenait pour des poètes.

Français du XVIII^{me} siècle, Chénier l'était aussi par son goût pour les sciences. Au moment où la mort vint si cruellement le faucher, il songeait, moderne Lucrèce, à célébrer, en un poème de la nature, l'œuvre de Buffon. S'il n'eut pas le temps d'achever cet «Hermès», qui donnait de si belles promesses, il sut cependant montrer, indirectement, dans ses «Idylles», qu'il avait subi l'influence scientifique de son époque; la précision avec laquelle il note les détails nous en est une preuve. Dans «La jeune Tarentine», décrivant les préparatifs de la fête qui va se célébrer, il indique nettement tout ce qui a été «dans le cèdre enfermé». Dans «Le jeune Malade», le choix des présents nous montre, à n'en pas douter, que c'est un Grec qui parle:

“Tiens, prends cette corbeille et nos fruits les plus beaux;
Prends notre Amour d'ivoire, honneur de ces hameaux;
Prends la coupe d'onyx à Corinthe ravie;
Prends mes jeunes chevreaux, prends mon cœur, prends ma vie;”

Du temps de Racine, ce n'était pas ainsi qu'on imitait la Grèce.

Dans «La jeune Tarentine», voici encore un souvenir des coutumes grecques. Répondant à l'appel désolé des Néréides :

“Et les nymphes des bois, des sources, des montagnes,
Toutes frappant leur sein et traînant un long deuil,
Répétèrent, hélas! autour de son cercueil” . . .

Ce tableau ne fait-il pas pendant à celui où M^{me} Chénier décrit la coutume qu'on nomme «le dernier adieu»? De même, dans «Le jeune Malade», la gracieuse vision des danses en plein air rappelle aussi la Grèce telle que M^{me} Chénier la connaissait. L'art charmant avec lequel les détails, qui doivent former le fond de la scène, sont entrelacés à la peinture du mouvant tableau, nous fait songer à l'idéal que Buffon proposait à l'écrivain; il nous rappelle aussi l'importance que Diderot attachait, dans la critique d'art, au fond du tableau; enfin, comme chez Rousseau, on trouve notée la valeur musicale des bruits champêtres ou forestiers :

“O vent sonore et frais qui troublais le feuillage.”

Jusque dans sa prison, Chénier sut conserver cette merveilleuse fraîcheur d'imagination; c'est elle qui donne à «La jeune Captive» son plus grand charme; le poète avait le droit de dire avec son héroïne :

“L'illusion féconde habite dans mon sein.
D'une prison sur moi les murs pèsent en vain,
J'ai les ailes de l'espérance.”

Avec lui, l'inspiration poétique, franchissant tous les obstacles, préludait au grand réveil de la poésie lyrique que devait inaugurer le romantisme.

138a. Letter on Greek dances

By Madame Chénier

It seems to me that the French, who have accepted *all* the great and durable things which Antiquity has offered¹ [them], who have improved² [on] all that was pleasing, have many points in common³ with the Athenians. They preserve⁴ in Europe the superiority which this celebrated republic had acquired over the Greek States. *They have*⁵ the wit, the knowledge, the talents, the brilliant courage,⁶ and the politeness of the Athenians, they have⁷ also their⁸ cheerfulness, and the same taste for fashions, for love affairs,⁹ and for the theatre.¹⁰ But far from resembling them *as far as dancing is concerned*,¹¹ they ridicule¹² those who, *after they have reached the age of thirty*,¹³ should dare to dance. It is surprising that the fair¹⁴ sex, which has so much power over this amiable and susceptible¹⁵ nation, has¹⁶ not appealed¹⁷ from such a stern¹⁸ decision. Have the ladies forgotten that dancing is part¹⁹ of the attraction²⁰ of their sex? Why then²¹ give it up? Why *should it be*²² the attribute of youth alone?²³ Dancing goes with²⁴ the Graces; now²⁵ the Graces belong to²⁶ all ages; so²⁷ the master of the gods has willed it. They²⁸ say that when Jupiter was assigning to each Divinity its attributes and its power, the Graces came too late, and, as they were unable²⁹ to obtain any special worship,³⁰ Jupiter, to make up³¹ for it, granted them the power of appearing³² everywhere. Since then,³³ the Graces are found²⁸ in all countries, they belong²⁶ to all ages and to both³⁴ sexes. If, according to this arrangement, the Graces belong to³⁵ all ages of man, dancing and singing, which are used to bring them out,³⁶ might also belong²⁶ to all ages.

138b. Letter on Greek burials

A Greek lady whom you know, Sir, as distinguished by her position as by the beauty of her soul, and who added³⁷ to the charms²⁰ of her sex those of a fine³⁸ education, lived with a younger³⁹ brother, who, *out of excessive*⁴⁰ virtue, had given up the honors and positions to which his rank and his connections⁴¹ *entitled him*.⁴² He had for his sister the⁴³ tenderness of a brother and the⁴³ friendship of a virtuous friend. This beloved⁴⁴ brother, having caught a malignant fever, died after *a four-day illness*,⁴⁵ in spite of the care which wealth and friendship bestowed⁴⁶ upon him. His sister, *according to the custom*⁴⁷ of the country, accompanied the *funeral procession*,⁴⁸ preceded by part⁴⁹ of the Greek nobility. Everything showed⁵⁰ the depression⁵¹ of this sensitive¹⁵ soul; the disorder of her veil and of her clothes, *the carelessness with which her hair had been put up*,⁵² added new characteristics⁵³ to all the other marks of her grief. The body was received at the door of the church by the Patriarch of Constantinople. After *the customary*⁵⁴ prayers, he performed⁵⁵ the ceremony which the Greeks have preserved and which is²⁸ called the last farewell. After the patriarch had embraced the body, the parents and those who formed the procession did the same.⁵⁶ This scene, which the idea of an eternal farewell makes⁵⁷ only too touching,⁵⁸ became even more so when this sister *in tears*,⁵⁹ listening only to the impulse⁶⁰ of her grief, tore her clothes and *her hair*⁶¹ *to place these tokens of her grief on*⁶² the coffin⁶³ of a brother she was soon to see no more. Efforts were²⁸ made to shorten⁶⁴ this lugubrious scene and to bring back to her home the bereaved⁶⁵ sister. She had calmed down and her grief was *somewhat subdued*.⁶⁶ As the details⁶⁷ connected⁶⁹ with the site⁷⁰ of this

house [are of great importance in connection with the picture] *I am going to draw for you*,⁶⁸ I leave your sentiment in suspense, in order to give you an idea of it. This house, situated on the bank of the Narrows⁷¹ of the Black Sea, opens⁷² upon a garden from whence you²⁸ *can have the most beautiful and magnificent view of the Narrows*.⁷³ This garden was adorned by beautiful flowers and a few fruit trees; on⁷⁴ one side was an aviary⁷⁵ full of birds of all kinds, and on⁷⁴ the other [side], a reservoir, supplied⁷⁶ with fresh sea water,⁷⁷ contained⁷⁸ all kinds of fish; this garden, these flowers, and the fish were the amusements of the Sage whom death had just snatched⁷⁹ from his sister and his friends. You already feel, Sir, how much this background⁶⁷ adds to the scene; "Where is my brother," said the disconsolate⁸⁰ sister, *her eyes wandering all over the garden*,⁸¹ "he has passed away"⁸² . . . he has passed like a shadow. . . You, Flowers, which he used to cultivate with so much pleasure, you already have lost the freshness which you owed to his care . . . perish with him . . . bend down, dry up *even to*⁸³ the root. You, fish, since you no longer have a master and a friend who *watches*¹⁶ *over*⁸⁴ your life⁸⁵ . . . return to the deep waters . . . to seek a *precarious life*⁸⁶ . . . and you, little birds, if you survive your sorrow . . . let it be¹⁶ only to accompany my sighs with your mournful⁸⁷ songs. . . . Peaceful⁸⁸ sea, at present *your waves are rising*⁸⁹ . . . could it be possible that you too *have*¹⁶ *a share in my grief*'⁹⁰ . . . Judge, Sir, of the *impressions*⁹¹ produced on the spectators by this touching apostrophe made with the tranquillity which grief gives only to great souls. This lady then turning toward her slaves, said to them: "Weep, children, you no longer have a father . . . my brother has *passed away*"⁸² . . . cruel death has bereaved⁹² us. . . . He has disappeared as the shadow . . .

and we shall no longer see him; these places⁹³ which his presence made⁵⁷ delightful must be for us only an abode⁹⁴ of grief and sorrow. ' ' It is not possible, Sir, to give to nature more expression, more strength, more *genuine simplicity*.⁹⁵ I thought you *would be pleased to see*⁹⁶ this little sample of Greek eloquence, *when, in its ravings*,⁹⁷ a rich⁹⁸ imagination so vividly pictures all the feelings of the soul.

A traduire en anglais

139. Le jeune Malade

Fragment d'Idylle

O côteaux d'Erymanthe! ô vallons! ô bocage!
 O vent sonore et frais qui troublais le feuillage,
 Et faisais frémir l'onde, et sur leur jeune sein
 Agitais les replis de leur robe de lin!
 De légères beautés troupe agile et dansante . . .
 Tu sais, tu sais, ma mère? aux bords de l'Erymanthe.
 Là, ni loups ravisseurs, ni serpent, ni poisons . . .
 O visage divin! ô fêtes! ô chansons!
 Des pas entrelacés, des fleurs, une onde pure,
 Aucun lieu n'est si beau dans toute la nature.
 Dieux! ces bras et ces fleurs, ces cheveux, ces pieds nus
 Si blancs, si délicats! je ne les verrai plus!
 Oh! portez, portez-moi sur les bords d'Erymanthe;
 Que je la voie encor. cette vierge charmante!
 Oh! que je voie au loin la fumée à longs flots
 S'élever de ce toit au bord de cet enclos.

ANDRÉ CHÉNIER.

140. La jeune Tarentine

Pleurez, doux alcyons ! ô vous, oiseaux sacrés,
Oiseaux chers à Thétis, doux alcyons, pleurez !

Elle a vécu, Myrto, la jeune Tarentine !
Un vaisseau la portait aux bords de Camarine :
Là, l'hymen, les chansons, les flûtes, lentement
Devaient la reconduire au seuil de son amant.
Une clef vigilante a, pour cette journée,
Dans le cèdre enfermé sa robe d'hyménée,
Et l'or dont au festin ses bras seront parés,
Et pour ses blonds cheveux les parfums préparés.
Mais, seule sur la proue, invoquant les étoiles,
Le vent impétueux, qui soufflait dans les voiles
L'enveloppe : étonnée et loin des matelots,
Elle crie, elle tombe, elle est au sein des flots.

Elle est au sein des flots, la jeune Tarentine !
Son beau corps a roulé sous la vague marine
Thétis, les yeux, en pleurs, dans le creux d'un rocher,
Aux monstres dévorants eut soin de le cacher.
Par son ordre bientôt les belles Néréides
S'élèvent au-dessus des demeures humides,
Le poussent au rivage, et dans ce monument
L'ont au cap du Zéphyr déposé mollement ;
Et de loin, à grand cris appelant leurs compagnes,
Et les nymphes des bois, des sources, des montagnes,
Toutes, frappant leur sein et traînant un long deuil,
Répétèrent, hélas ! autour de son cercueil :

« Hélas ! chez ton amant tu n'es point ramenée,
Tu n'as point revêtu ta robe d'hyménée,

L'or autour de ton bras n'a point serré de nœuds,
Et le bandeau d'hymen n'orna point tes cheveux.»

ANDRÉ CHÉNIER.

141. Mirabeau

Tous les grands écrivains qui, par leurs idées avancées et libérales, ont préparé la révolution, meurent avant le moment où elle éclate. Cependant, ils ont eu un représentant: Mirabeau, le grand tribun, est le seul homme politique qui, par son savoir encyclopédique, puisse représenter, au commencement de la tourmente révolutionnaire, l'esprit du XVIII^{me} siècle. Lui seul est véritablement un grand orateur; lui seul a la profondeur de vues qui caractérisait Montesquieu et lui permettait de voir d'avance l'enchaînement des événements. L'idée de Mirabeau était de réconcilier la royauté avec le nouveau pouvoir que représentait l'Assemblée Constituante; c'est à cette œuvre qu'il consacra des efforts qui malheureusement ne furent pas désintéressés; on l'accusa de pactiser avec la cour quand lui croyait pouvoir légitimement accepter le prix des services qu'il rendait. Ce fait révèle chez Mirabeau ce manque de sens moral si caractéristique de l'époque où il a vécu. Il est difficile de dire si ce grand orateur était aussi grand écrivain; presque toujours il se servait du travail des autres, se contentant de le retoucher et d'y mettre sa griffe. Tout jeune, il avait montré cette tendance, et son père, qui s'en indignait, l'appelait «le geai des carrefours».

Au moment où il était arrivé au faite de la popularité, il mourut, et sa mort fut un deuil national. Quelles qu'aient été ses fautes, sa carrière tragique, ses emprisonnements, ses malheurs suivis d'une popularité inouïe, sa mort inat-

tendue, tout concourt à donner à sa figure énigmatique un sombre éclat.

Séjour de Mirabeau en Angleterre, 1785. Lettres citées dans
 "Les Mirabeau", par L. de Loménie

142a. Letter from Mirabeau to M^{me} de Nehra

Gilbert is *kindness itself*,¹ he is *making plans of all kinds*² for my *future prospects*,³ *with a view of*⁴ bringing us more closely together. For instance, on his trip⁵ to Scotland, he will give orders to have a little house on his estate⁷ prepared⁶ for us, because he wishes we should spend the whole summer with⁸ him, [an arrangement which will be⁹] [both] pleasing and economical.

142b. Letter from Sir Gilbert Elliott

Translated from the French

I have found¹⁰ Mirabeau, our former persecuted school-mate, as ardent a friend as I had left him, and as little changed *as he possibly could be*¹¹ in¹² twenty years, six of which have been spent in prison, and the remainder in personal and in domestic quarrels. His talents, which are really wonderful, have considerably matured,¹³ and he has acquired a *considerable fund of knowledge*¹⁴. . . . Mirabeau is *just as peremptory*¹⁵ in his conversation, just as awkward¹⁶ in his manner, *his face is just as plain*,¹⁷ *his figure just as awkward*,¹⁸ he is just as untidy in his dress as he ever was, and, *in addition to that*,¹⁹ just as conceited²⁰ as [we remember him] at school twenty years ago. And yet, I loved him then, and you loved him too, although he admits that sometimes you used to quarrel with him, because you *did not*

*always meet*²² his excessive demands²³ *with as much patience*.²¹ His courage, his energy, his wit, his talents, his application, and, above all, his misfortunes and his sufferings should rather increase²⁴ than weaken our affection for him, and I have been sincerely glad *to welcome him*²⁵ and perhaps serve him.

142c. Gilbert Elliott to his brother Hugh

The other day I brought²⁶ Mirabeau with me here at Bath. He *courted Henrietta in such a hasty manner*,²⁷ *being fully convinced*²⁸ that he could within a week subjugate her, he so absolutely bewildered²⁹ my John Bull of a wife who does not understand a Frenchman any better than Molly the maid,³⁰ he so frightened³¹ my little boy while caressing him, he so completely monopolized³² me from breakfast to supper-time, he so surprised all our friends, that *I found it hard*³³ *to stand up for him*,³⁴ and if he had not been unexpectedly³⁶ called³⁵ into town this morning, I am [not] sure that my wife's patience, I cannot say her politeness, *would have held out*.³⁷

Among the Englishmen *of note*³⁸ *with whom Mirabeau came into contact when*³⁹ in London, besides Sir Gilbert Elliott *we must mention*⁴⁰ Samuel Romilly, *well known then, both as a*⁴¹ jurist and as a judicious orator, [he was the] friend of a few refugees belonging to the Genevese democratic party, and it was *through his medium*⁴² that Mirabeau became acquainted with Lord Shelburne, since Marquis of Landsowne, former prime minister, who had just entrusted to his young colleague, Pitt, the leadership of the Whig party; Burke, the powerful orator of the House of Commons and the future adversary of that Revolution *in which*⁴³ Mirabeau was going to come into prominence.⁴⁴ Lord Shelburne and Burke *were friends of*⁴⁵ Sir Gilbert Elliott. Mirabeau *tried also to*

*make friends with*⁴⁶ Dr. Price, the philosopher and political writer, friend of Franklin. His intention was to utilize⁴⁷ the work and advice of Price *in connection with the essay*⁴⁸ he was then preparing on the Order of Cincinnatus, recently established in America; he had previously, and before leaving France, submitted this work to Franklin.

143a. Influence du Moi

Au dix-septième siècle Pascal avait pu dire sans courir le risque d'être contredit: "Le moi est haïssable". Ce fut Rousseau qui enseigna à ses contemporains comment on peut placer son moi sur un piédestal. Dans cet étrange passage des "Confessions" où "il convoque l'Etre Suprême à un colloque solennel que devra écouter la foule des humains," on voit clairement que, dans le dérangement de son esprit, l'orgueil a pris un développement anormal; on voit aussi qu'il revendique au nom de la sincérité le droit de tout dire. Sous ce rapport, Rousseau a fait école; les "Mémoires" de M^{me} Roland le prouvent déjà. C'est aussi de Rousseau que les romantiques tiendront ce je ne sais quoi de morbide qui les caractérise tous.

I am forming an enterprise *which never had any precedent*,¹ and *which when carried out*² will not find³ any imitators. I intend to show my fellow men⁴ a man *as nature made him*,⁵ and I⁶ shall be the man.

I alone. I know⁷ my own heart and I know men. I dare say⁸ *I am unlike*⁹ any other living men. If I am not better, at least I am different. If nature has done *wrong or not*¹⁰ in breaking the mould in which I have been cast,¹¹ *is a thing which*¹² you can only decide¹³ after having read me. Let the trumpet of the last judgment resound *at any time*,¹⁴ I shall appear¹⁶ [with] this book in my¹⁵ hand in presence¹⁶ of the sovereign judge. I shall say without hesitation: "This is what I have done, what I have thought, what I have been. I have said the good and the bad with

the same sincerity. I have not concealed anything bad, I have not added anything good; and if *perchance I have used*¹⁷ some indifferent ornament, I have done it in order to fill up a gap¹⁸ occasioned by my lack of memory. I may have supposed *a thing to be true when*¹⁹ I thought *it might have been*,²⁰ never what I knew was false. I have shown myself such as I was: despicable and mean when I have been *so*,²⁰ kind, generous, sublime when I have been *so*,²⁰ I have revealed²¹ my *inmost heart*²² such as thou hast seen it Thyself, Eternal Being. Let²³ the innumerable crowd of my fellow men gather around me, let them listen [to] my confessions, bemoan²⁴ my unworthiness,²⁵ blush over my meannesses.²⁶ Let each one in his turn, [and] with the same *spirit of truth*,²⁸ *lay bare*²⁷ his heart at the foot of thy throne; and then let *any one*²⁹ say, if he dares, I was better than that man.

143b. Madame Roland

Les femmes célèbres, au XVIII^{me} siècle, représentent toutes les classes et il est à remarquer que, plus on descend dans l'ordre social, plus le niveau moral s'élève; ainsi, M^{me} Roland, qui appartenait à la petite bourgeoisie, est une des figures les plus pures de ce temps-là. Femme du ministre girondin, elle joua un certain rôle en politique et mérita d'être surnommée "l'âme de la Gironde". L'étude de la philosophie et de l'histoire grecques avait formé son âme au stoïcisme.

[I, the] daughter of [an] artist, [the] wife of a scholar [who] became³⁰ [a] minister and remained³⁰ [a] righteous man, [I am] now³¹ [a] prisoner, perhaps destined to a sudden³² and violent death; I have known happiness and adversity, I have seen glory *near by*³³ and I have *suffered from*³⁴ injustice. Born in a *very modest position*,³⁵ but of honest

parents, I have spent my youth *in artistic surroundings*,³⁶ [being] bred³⁷ [to enjoy] the delights of study, *knowing no other*³⁸ superiority than that of merit, *no other*³⁸ greatness than that of virtue. At the age when³⁹ one chooses a position,³⁵ I lost the prospects⁴⁰ of wealth which might have *secured for me a standing*⁴¹ *in keeping with*⁴² the education I had received. It seemed⁴⁵ that my *marriage with a*⁴³ worthy⁴⁴ man *was to make up*⁴⁵ *for the hardships*⁴⁶ [I had suffered]; *it was the beginning*⁴⁷ of new ones.

A gentle disposition,⁴⁸ a brave⁴⁹ soul, a *good mind*,⁵⁰ a very affectionate heart, an external [appearance] which *betokened all these qualities*,⁵¹ have endeared⁵² me to all those who knew me. [Owing to] the position in which I was placed, *I had*⁵³ enemies, personally I had none; the people *who say the worst things about*⁵⁴ me have never seen me.

It is so true that things are rarely as they appear to be, that the periods⁵⁵ of my life in which I have enjoyed⁵⁶ the greatest happiness or suffered⁵⁷ the deepest grief are often *very different from*⁵⁸ what other [people] might think,⁵⁹ for the very reason that happiness *depends more on*⁶⁰ feeling than on events.

In my captivity I am planning⁶¹ to devote⁶² my leisure⁶³ [hours] to the story of my life from my earliest⁶⁴ childhood to this time; *to retrace step by step*⁶⁶ one's career is to live⁶⁵ one's life over again. To fancy⁶⁸ yourself elsewhere through⁶⁹ [the medium of] a happy fiction or through interesting recollections, *isn't it the best thing to do when you are in prison?*⁶⁷

If experience *is to be acquired not so much*⁷⁰ by action as by reflection on what you see and on what you have done, mine may increase considerably, by [carrying out] the undertaking I am just beginning.

Public affairs, my personal feelings during the two months

I have spent in prison,⁷¹ have given me sufficient food for thought,⁷² it was not necessary to go back⁷³ to a far distant past, that is why the five first weeks had been devoted⁷⁴ to the writing of⁷⁵ "Historical Notes," a work which⁷⁶ was not perhaps without merit. They have just been destroyed, I have felt the bitterness of a loss which I shall not try to repair, but I should feel indignant with myself if I allowed myself to be depressed⁷⁷ by anything.

In every trouble I have experienced⁷⁸ the first impression of grief⁷⁹ was almost immediately followed by⁸⁰ the ambition to oppose with⁸¹ all my strength⁸² the trouble⁸³ which had come upon me,⁸⁴ and to overcome⁸⁵ it either by doing good to others, or by increasing my own courage. Thus, misfortune may follow me without overwhelming⁸⁶ me, tyrants may persecute me but they will never lower me,⁸⁷ never, never. My "Historical Notes" are lost, I am going to write Memoirs, and, prudently adapting myself⁸⁸ to my own strength in a time when⁸⁹ I am so painfully impressed,⁹⁰ I am going to talk about myself,⁹¹ because I shall thus all the better get out of myself.⁹² I shall feel equally free to show myself in a bad or in a favorable light,⁹³ he who dares not give⁹⁴ himself a good testimony is almost always a coward who knows the bad things which might be said against him and who is afraid of them,⁹⁵ and he who hesitates in admitting his wrong doings⁹⁶ has not the strength to face⁹⁷ them or to atone⁹⁸ for them. If I show so much frankness with regard to myself,⁹⁹ I shall not hesitate to be just as sincere with regard to others;¹⁰⁰ father, mother, friends, husband, I shall paint them all as they are¹⁰¹ or as¹⁰² I have seen them.

As long as I remained in a peaceful condition and entirely wrapped within myself,¹⁰³ my natural sensibility was so blended¹⁰⁴ [with] all my other qualities that it was the only

*thing to be noticed*¹⁰⁵ in me, or *the most marked characteristic*.¹⁰⁶ My strongest impulse was to please and do good.

I deserved what Sainte-Lette said about me: *although I was witty enough to whet*¹⁰⁷ a delicate epigram, *I never dropped*¹⁰⁸ one.

Since circumstances, political storms and others have developed the energy of my character, *my first wish is to be sincere*¹⁰⁹ and *I do not care whether or not I slightly hurt people's feelings*,¹¹⁰ *I still refrain*¹¹¹ from epigrams, for *it naturally follows*¹¹² [that when indulging in epigrams, you take pleasure in] *hurting by*¹¹³ your criticism, and I cannot *find pleasure in*¹¹⁴ killing flies; but I like [by my sincere effort] *to drive home a piece of truth*,¹¹⁵ *when exposing*¹¹⁶ the most awful [things] to the very face of the people who are concerned,¹¹⁷ I do it without showing surprise, without being moved, and without getting angry, *whatever may be*¹¹⁸ the effect [of my revelations] upon others.

Mémoires de Madame Roland.

144. Conclusion

M. de Talleyrand disait: «Qui n'a pas vécu avant 1789 ne connaît pas la douceur de vivre.» Qui peut retenir un mouvement de surprise en lisant pour la première fois ces lignes? On songe au brillant tableau des idées que fait ressortir, par le contraste, un sombre cadre de prisons; et l'on évoque successivement l'image de ceux dont le nom s'y rattache; à la Bastille: Voltaire, Marmontel, l'abbé Morellet, Mlle Delaunay, le marquis de Mirabeau; à Vincennes, Diderot et Mirabeau; au For-l'Evêque, Beaumarchais; à Sainte-Pélagie, M^{me} Roland; à Saint-Lazare, André

Chénier. Et il ne s'agit encore que de Paris. Mirabeau savait par expérience qu'on pouvait être enfermé au Château d'If sur un îlot de la Méditerranée et au fort de Joux enseveli sous les neiges.

L'emprisonnement, l'exil pour les hommes de lettres, les persécutions de l'Eglise, les crimes judiciaires, la guerre en permanence, les famines, la misère profonde des pauvres, tout cela semble devoir noyer le tableau d'ombres intenses. Et pourtant, voilà la grand'mère de George Sand, M^{me} Dupin, qui vient corroborer le dire de Talleyrand et l'expliquer en une certaine mesure; d'après son témoignage, nous comprenons qu'alors les caractères étaient autrement trempés. Voici comment elle décrit son mari, ce Francueil qui fut l'ami de M^{me} d'Epinaÿ: «Je l'appelais mon vieux mari et mon papa. Il le voulait ainsi et ne m'appelait jamais que sa fille, même en public. Et puis, est-ce qu'on était jamais vieux dans ce temps-là! C'est la révolution qui a amené la vieillesse dans le monde. Votre grand-père, ma fille, a été beau, élégant, soigné, gracieux, parfumé, enjoué, aimable, affectueux et d'une humeur égale jusqu'à l'heure de sa mort. . . . Il avait le don de savoir toujours s'occuper d'une manière agréable pour les autres autant que pour lui-même. Le jour, il faisait de la musique avec moi; il était excellent violon, et faisait ses violons lui-même, car il était luthier, outre qu'il était horloger, architecte, tourneur, peintre, serrurier, décorateur, cuisinier, poète, compositeur de musique, menuisier, et qu'il brodait à merveille. Je ne sais pas ce qu'il n'était pas. Le malheur, c'est qu'il mangea sa fortune à satisfaire tous ces instincts divers, et à expérimenter toutes choses; mais je n'y vis que du feu, et nous nous ruinâmes le plus aimablement du monde.

C'est qu'on savait vivre et mourir dans ce temps-là, on

n'avait pas d'infirmités importunes. Si on avait la goutte, on marchait quand même et sans faire la grimace; on se cachait de souffrir par bonne éducation. . . . On se serait fait porter demi-mort à une partie de chasse. On trouvait qu'il valait mieux mourir au bal ou à la comédie que dans son lit, entre quatre cierges et de vilains hommes noirs. On était philosophe, on ne jouait pas l'austérité, on l'avait parfois sans en faire montre.» Ce qui ressort surtout de ce passage, c'est la soif d'activité intellectuelle et physique. Et à quelle époque a-t-on jamais eu plus belle occasion de l'étancher? C'était, d'abord, le merveilleux développement des études scientifiques, la passion de faire des collections et des expériences, attisée par les découvertes des savants; puis, l'éducation artistique qui se faisait par les salons de peinture, par la critique d'art, par les rapports plus intimes entre hommes de lettres et artistes; l'éducation philosophique, qui se répandait par l'Encyclopédie et par les salons où le charme de la conversation surpassait tout ce qu'on peut imaginer; le goût des voyages, qui amenait un double résultat scientifique et sentimental: l'intérêt qu'on prenait aux peuples étrangers se manifestait par l'histoire de la civilisation, l'étude comparée des lois; enfin, on aimait les étrangers et on sentait naître en soi les sentiments nouveaux de fraternité et d'humanité. Puis, la liberté qu'on avait découverte chez les autres, on voulait l'introduire en France, et les esprits inventifs découvraient mille manières de l'acclimater. On sympathisait avec les malheureux et on savourait les larmes versées; on donnait libéralement et avec joie; on se passionnait pour la vertu et des écrivains, tel Marivaux, entreprenaient d'élever le niveau moral de leurs contemporains et réussissaient dans cette difficile entreprise. On faisait des plans de réformes et on découvrait

l'art de l'agriculture, le travail manuel, le charme de la vie simple et, avec la beauté et la poésie de la nature, une religion nouvelle. Cette fièvre intellectuelle, qui montait au cerveau, empêchait de voir la réalité trop sombre; elle remplissait l'imagination de rêves d'une douceur extraordinaire. Enfin, c'est de toutes ces aspirations que devait se dégager la devise révolutionnaire : liberté, égalité, fraternité.

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